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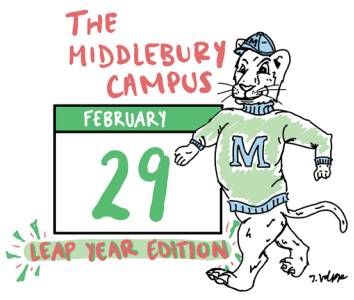

Trustees talk tuition, construction, finances for 2023-2024

By KATIE FUTTERMAN
Managing Editor

A winter weekend at Middlebury was host to important decisions by the Board of Trustees. On Feb. 9 and 10, the Board increased tuition and named the Christian A. Johnson Memorial Building plaza, among other discussions of finances, construction projects and language learning.

The trustees approved a 3.54% increase for the 2024-2025 academic year, according to the college's announcement on Feb. 26. The increase brings this past year's $83,880 tuition price up to $86,850 for the 2024-2025 academic year. The percent increase is less than the past two years, in which the tuition increased by 4.5% each year.

The projected deficit for the fiscal year is $8.9 million, up from last year's deficit of $8.2

million. The projection increased from its initial $8.4 million earlier this year due to a decrease in tuition revenue from the Middlebury Institute for International Studies at Monterey (MIIS) and an increase in health care claims, David Provost, executive vice president for finance and administration, wrote in an email to The Campus.

Middlebury has raised just over $440 million toward its $600 million goal for the "For Every Future:" The Campaign for Middlebury, which puts the campaign nine months ahead of schedule, Dan Courcey, vice president for advancement, wrote in an email to The Campus. The college has already broken its single-year fundraising record of $103 million by raising over $125 million within the first seven months of the current fiscal year.

Donors can give money to specific projects embodied in the pillars of the campaign, according to Courcey. So far, it has reached 60% of its $215 million goal for access and financial aid, 69% of its $120 million goal for academic excellence and 50% of its $70.5 million goal of experiential learning.

"Early campaign contributions come from our closest supporters and we are very grateful, but we still have quite a way to go," he wrote.

Courcey added that the goal is to reach $600 million by no later than June 30, 2028.

The new first year dorm that will replace Battell is projected to finish in the summer of 2025 and be ready to use for language schools that summer, according to Provost. It is currently unnamed, and Provost did not provide a timeline for the naming process, but said that it will be decided by the Board of Trustees.

So far, the college has reviewed 13 prospective design teams for construction of a proposed museum of fine arts where Battell Hall currently stands. The Building, Grounds and

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WINTER CARNIVAL RETURNS TO MIDDLEBURY WITH SKI RACES, ICE SCULPTURE CONTEST AND MORE

By LIV SANCHEZ
Staff Writer

ISABEL THOMAS '26.5 / COURTESY PHOTO

Students hiked the Snowbowl to cheer on skiers at Saturday's race.

The annual Winter Carnival returned to campus at full capacity last weekend, following a brief ski race hiatus last year. The weekend included Middlebury Carnival ski races as well as on-campus activities organized by Middlebury College Activities Board (MCAB) such as an ice-sculpting competition outside of Proctor Dining Hall, s'more-making on Battell Beach and a formal masquerade-themed ball held in the Virtue Field House on Saturday night.

Hundreds of students made their way to the Rikert Outdoor Center and the Snow Bowl on Saturday, Feb. 24 to spend time with peers and watch Middlebury's alpine and nordic ski teams race against 13 other schools in the Middlebury Carnival, which was also the Eastern Intercollegiate Ski Association Championship carnival. As is tradition, students dressed in neon and retro ski apparel and crowded the base of the slopes or climbed up to spectate. With the combined scores of the alpine and nordic teams, Middlebury finished third overall in the carnival, as the University of Vermont took first place.

Middlebury Ski Patrol member Sofia Bobroff '26 worked at the Snow Bowl on Saturday and said the day went well overall. "It was so great to see so many people show up for the ski team," Bobroff wrote in a message to The Campus.

In addition to the races going well and the high energy from the crowd, Bobroff noted that Ski Patrol also had a successful day.

"Patrol's operations went really smoothly, we responded to some accidents which was as expected. At times it was difficult to manage the crowd, but all things considered I think we had a pretty successful day," Bobroff wrote.

The Snow Bowl serves alcohol at the event, and in past years, the college has run buses between campus and both Rikert and the Snow Bowl to give students who choose to consume alcohol an easy, safe way to travel to the carnival. This year, no transportation beyond the Tri Valley Transit buses was offered from campus. Buses did run between the overflow parking lot at Rikert and the Snow Bowl, but students were largely responsible for their own transportation between campus and Rikert.

"I know a lot of students were concerned about drunk driving, and I think it's a good idea to bring back the buses in the future," Bobroff told The Campus.

Makayla Reed '26 and Erik Budo Uerkwitz '26, two of the executive board members of MCAB, spoke with The Campus about the planning process and organization that went into the weekend's itinerary. According to Reed, the club met weekly during J-Term to brainstorm event ideas.

"We started by just throwing out ideas and seeing what we thought would be cool," Reed said. She noted that multiple features of the weekend, such as the chocolate fountain, 360-degree video camera and mechanical bull featured at the Masquerade Ball, were originally casual propositions from members of the general board.

The most challenging part of the planning process for Reed and Budo Uerkwitz involved securing contracts and searching for optimal pricing. According to Budo Uerkwitz, all events were paid for using funding from the MCAB budget.

Although some activities such as the Masquerade Ball are rooted in tradition, an expansive budget has allowed for additional activities in recent years,

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Middlebury named top producer of Fulbrights for 2023-2024

By CAROLINE JIAO
Staff Writer

Middlebury has been named a top producer for the Fulbright U.S. Student and Scholar Programs for the 2023–2024 academic year by the U.S. Department of State and the Fulbright Program. Four out of 23 student applicants and three faculty members at Middlebury were selected for the awards. With seven Fulbrights awarded, Middlebury received the highest number of fellowships among baccalaureate institutions.

Lisa Gates, associate dean for fellowships and research, works with students and alumni applying for awards through the Fellowships Office in the Center for Teaching, Learning and Research (CTLR). Gates said she believes Middlebury students and the Fulbright program are a natural match.

"Our students tend to be very engaged in language learning, studying abroad, and international issues. They're interested in people and places and cultures outside of

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JOIN THE CLUB INITIATIVE OFFERS NEW FUNDRAISING OPPORTUNITY FOR STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS

By SUSANNA SCHATZ
Senior News Editor

The Office of Advancement and the Student Activities Office (SAO) are collaborating with student organizations this spring to launch the inaugural Join the Club fundraising campaign. Club leaders had the opportunity to opt into the campaign between Dec. 5 and Feb. 21, and the actual fundraiser will run for one week during the month of April.

Thirty-six student organizations signed up for the Join the Club initiative.

"We rolled out information sessions in December, sent out information throughout J-Term and the start of the semester to get student organizations informed and excited as well as collect information so that the Office of Advancement has time to build the campaign for the kick off in April," wrote Annie Delehanty, assistant director for student organizations and club sports, in an email to The Campus.

Planning for the fundraising campaign has been in the works since last spring in order to roll out the program to organizations in December, according to Delehanty. Donations will be collected on an online platform specifically for Join the Club during the week-long campaign. Donors will be able to designate which organization(s) they wish to direct their contribution towards.

The Office of Advancement, SAO and the student organizations that opted into the fundraiser will share the responsibility for spreading the word.

"All three entities will be promoting the campaign to help student organizations share the amazing work they do and raise money for continuing their mission," Delehanty wrote.

The SAO in particular plans to promote the initiative on their social media and urge student organizations to get excited and tell their peers about it, according to Delehanty.

"The organizations are encouraged to reach out to their alumni networks and anyone they know who might be interested in contributing," she added.

Funds raised in the Join the Club campaign will be added to organizations' gift accounts. Gift accounts are the discretionary funds that student organizations can use to pay for any expenses not covered by the funding allocated to their operating budget from the Student Government Association Finance Committee.

Middlebury College Musical Theatre (MCMT) is one student organization participating in the Join the Club fundraiser. They put on musical theater performances each semester. Jonathan Mount '25.5, president of MCMT, shared his excitement about the initiative and its potential to benefit the organization.

"Our goal as an organization is to connect the community through the wonderful world of musical theatre," Mount wrote in a message to The Campus. "However, with recent budget changes, it is becoming increasingly difficult to fund our events, specifically our musical productions."

Mount hopes that the fundraiser will help make up for these recent budget cuts. He explained that a new policy has been implemented by the SAO for performing arts organizations that prevents them from using club funds for ticketed performances. This means that MCMT cannot

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use the club's SAO allocated budget for anything related to the musicals they put on. This includes paying for things like rights to scripts, costumes and sets, according to Mount.

"According to the policy, if we want to put on a ticketed musical performance, we must take out a loan from the SAO, and if we don't make a profit, we as students are in debt to the SAO," Mount said.

He explained this new policy is challenging and pushes MCMT to be in opposition of its goals as an organization by prioritizing money over experience.

"Fundraising would help

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Panthers take third place in EISA Championships with impressive showing at Middlebury carnival
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Black Student Union holds Apollo Night, Soul Food Sunday and other celebrations for Black History Month

By COLE CHAUDHARI
News Editor

In celebration of the month of February as Black History month, the Black Student Union (BSU) has held events including Apollo Night and Soul Food Sunday, along with the upcoming Night of Black Culture.

The BSU hosted its traditional Apollo Night in Coltrane Lounge on Feb. 22, an open-microphone style event in which participants come to the stage to share artistic expression centered around the primacy of the voice — mainly spoken poetry, acapella music and short speeches.

The size of the audience ranged from approximately fifteen to twenty people over the course of the event, and the participants included both previously registered performers and audience members who felt spontaneously moved to share in the Apollo Night environment.

Performances at the Apollo Night gathering ranged from renditions of famous works of written art by celebrated Black artists — Nina Simone, Audre Lorde and June Jordan all featured prominently — to the sharing of original compositions by members of the BSU and non-members alike. Many of the performances centered around the realities of Black life and experiences, both at Middlebury and beyond.

In addition to Apollo Night, the BSU incorporated into its Black History Month programming a workshop with Justalks on Feb. 15 that dealt with Black romance on campus, a ceramics-making event on Feb. 16 and a meditation space in collaboration with the Center for Health and Wellness on Feb. 20.

BSU Co-President Arsema Lecko '26 explained that the current format of the BSU represents a marked change to how the group previously went about organizing administrative duties and group events.

"This summer, we introduced the new positions and we threw out a lot of ideas for meeting ideas and event ideas. We were all feeling very passionate about the opportunities," Lecko told The Campus. "As we were planning for Black History Month in the fall and over winter break, we went back to the list from the summer."

Some events like the Apollo Night are an annual tradition for the BSU and are easy to incorporate into the slate of events for Black History Month, BSU Co-President Cynthia Walton '25 explained.

"It's traditional, and it is written into our budget. It's something that we definitely want to do and will continue doing," Walton said.

After Apollo Night concluded, Lecko explained to The Campus the history of its venue, Coltrane Lounge, and the lounge's strong ties to both the Black Student Union and extended the Black community on the Middlebury campus.

"In the 1980s, after the assassination of Martin Luther King Jr., the Middlebury admissions office elected to admit 16 Black students, which was the largest class of Black students in the school's history," Lecko said. "The admitted Black students advocated for having a space for them, because they didn't feel safe anywhere on campus. They were gifted Coltrane, named after John Coltrane, and since then Coltrane has been an important center for Black students."

Lecko added that since the return of students to campus after the Covid-19 pandemic, the administration has slowly expanded the function of Coltrane Lounge to be used by the entire student body, thereby restricting the ability of the BSU to host social events and keep the space as their own.

"We have to book Coltrane now, and we are not allowed to throw parties here, and we have so many restrictions. It's not our space anymore. We try to do all of our meetings and the majority of events in here to honor the people who fought so hard to have that space before us," Lecko explained. [1]

On Feb. 25, the BSU hosted Soul Food Sunday, a dinnertime group meal in the Anderson Freeman Center.

Like Apollo Night, Soul Food Sunday came together from the efforts of both BSU members and non-members, resulting in a diverse selection of fresh, home-cooked foods available for attendees to eat.

Walton explained that the food options available at the Soul Food Sunday gathering represented Black identities and cultural fixtures beyond America.

"We have people making soul food not just from America, but from so many different countries, including Caribbean countries," she said.

The BSU is currently in the middle of planning their Night of Black Culture, an annual festivity that celebrates graduating Black seniors. Lecko noted that the BSU leadership is looking to expand the programming of their Night of Black Culture for this year's celebration.

"We have performers, and we have dancers, and this year we are really trying to make it bigger. We're trying to bring in a performer or a poet, with the help of MCAB and organizations like that," Lecko said.

Both Walton and Lecko emphasized that Black History Month does not only include remembering the events of Black history, but also involves engaging with present and future understandings of Black life, bundling into one month of reflections on history, discussions of the present, and aspirations and goal-setting for the future.

"We're trying to continue Black History Month by telling people that you're Black all the time. It's not just one month, which happens to be the shortest month of the year," Walton said. "Black History Month is Black past, Black present and Black future."

MIDDLEBURY ANNOUNCES NEW MONTEREY GRADUATE SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM FOR STUDENTS FROM CHINA

COURTESY PHOTO/ JILL STOFFERS

Nuan He is a former student of the Middlebury Institute of International Studies at Monterey.

By JONATHAN EATON
Staff Writer

The Middlebury Institute of International Studies at Monterey (MIIS) is partnering with the China Scholarship Council to launch a new scholarship program beginning in the fall of 2024, intended to host 20 Chinese students at MIIS on a yearlong full-ride scholarship.

In addition to covering tuition and travel costs, the program will provide a stipend to each student at MIIS. Through the program, enrolled Chinese graduate students can study in four fields: international policy and development, international trade, environmental policy and management, and non-proliferation and terrorism studies.

"Right now our program that has the most Chinese students in it are our translation and interpretation programs. And so we have great Chinese representation there, but we've had relatively fewer Chinese students across our other degree programs," Jill Stoffers, senior director of institutional partnerships at MIIS, told The Campus. "The four programs that ultimately are part of this initial scholarship are ones that are really focused on diplomacy."

The partnership was formed to diversify the Monterey student body and to make graduate studies more accessible to a wider pool of students, Stoffers explained.

The Institute's student body is currently 40% international students, and 10% of international students pay full tuition, while the remaining 90% are on some type of scholarship, according to Stoffers.

"The Chinese Scholarship Council program is a remarkable opportunity for Chinese students to immerse themselves in an American institution of higher learning — rigorous subjects, American faculty and pedagogy, and, most importantly, learning in community with a highly diverse body of students in an American academy," MIIS Professor Robert A. Rogowsky wrote in an email to The Campus.

The largest barrier to enrollment at MIIS is the cost of tuition — currently $46,556 for a full academic year — so the Institute is working to partner with governments and non-profit organizations that help ease the financial burden on students, according to Stoffers. The college recently noted in an update of its financial forecast an institutional deficit of $8.9 million, which it partially attributed to "soft graduate enrollments" at the Institute this year.

In 2021, when MIIS tuition was $42,634, Data USA found the Institute was charging about $19,450 more than the national average for master's programs at both private and public schools.

The China Scholarship Council program is similar to the Institute's partnerships with the Spanish Embassy to provide an exchange program for Spanish-speaking students through the North American Language and Culture Assistants Program, in which the Spanish government partners with Monterey to cover fifty percent of a student's tuition costs.

Apart from the China Scholarship Council, MIIS has collaborated for over 30 years with the Peace Corps, the Organization of American States, the Inter-University Center For Japanese Language, and many more governments and international organizations, according to the MIIS website.

In addition to NGOs like the Peace Corps and Organization of American States, MIIS has a long history of partnering with other governments to host international students. In the past MIIS has worked with the governments of France, Germany and Kazakhstan, according to Stoffers.

MIIS receives funding from China's Ministry of Education. In 2016, the Chinese Scholarship Council was founded as an NGO designed to promote study abroad and international internships for Chinese students as a broader strategy to increase Chinese representation in the United Nations and other international organizations' workforces, according to reporting from The Diplomat.

After studying at Monterey, students are expected to work for six months as an intern at an international NGO before returning to China, according to the Chinese Scholarship Council.

Through these four degree pathways, Chinese students can take courses on intelligence analysis, chemical and biological weapons control and terrorism in Southeast Asia, among other related areas of study. These departments also offer classes on the economics of international trade and the economics of environmental resources.

Apart from MIIS, the China Scholarship Council has programs in Madrid at Instituto de Empresa University centered around global governance and sustainable development, and a program at the United Nations University of Maastricht Institute of Economics and Social Innovation Technology in China.

Stoffers looks forward to the increased accessibility of the program, and the diversity it will add.

"It's going to make graduate school possible for students that might not have otherwise been possible because of cost. Any time we can help students overcome that hurdle is really fulfilling to me," Stoffers said. "International students are such a vibrant and important part of our community, and having more international students is going to enrich the education for everybody in the classroom."

Join the Club initiative offers new fundraising opportunity for student organizations

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us immensely in realizing our goal of community connection," Mount said.

Funds in organizations' gift accounts are available for use in more ways than SGA allocated funds are, so any funding MCMT receives from the Join the Club initiative may be put toward facilitating their performances.

The SAO helps run the Proud to be a Panther fundraiser each fall, which provides varsity and club sports teams with a fundraising opportunity. They also support student organizations putting on their own fundraising events throughout the year, according to Delehanty. The Join the Club initiative is the first fundraiser of its kind, however, in that it was open for any student organization to participate.

"The key piece we are looking for from the organizations is their passion for their organization, show off what they have done and what they want to do and share it with as many people as possible," Delehanty wrote.

WINTER CARNIVAL RETURNS TO MIDDLEBURY WITH SKI RACES, ICE SCULPTURE CONTEST AND MORE

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according to members of MCAB's executive board.

"There wasn't a cash prize last year," said Budo Uerkwitz, referring to the ice-sculpting competition where groups of four and five students chipped away at huge blocks of ice.

Budo Uerkwitz and Reed stated that the ice-sculpting competition last year was not very popular. This year, however, student interest in a community competition surged following the announcement that there would be a $500 cash prize for the best sculpture, which was decided by student votes.

Olivia Reposa '24 was a member of the team that won the ice sculpture competition. Reposa, along with 10 friends, sculpted a toilet out of ice. She cited Marcel Duchamp's "Fountain" as the inspiration for the team's ice sculpture.

"Half the fun of the experience was being there with friends," Reposa wrote in a message to The Campus. "Given our many potentially more talented competitions we were truly honored that people were willing to vote for us."

Budo Uerkwitz supervises MCAB's finances. He emphasized the fact that the college's generosity allows him to accept most of the proposals brought forth by club members.

"When someone has a great idea, I'm like, 'yeah, just go for it,'"

"[Winter Carnival]'s something where the whole campus really comes together and you get to meet people you haven't before, and all your friends are there. And Middlebury needs things that create a larger sense of community. Especially in a small village, these events are absolutely essential," said Clay Rosser '26, a member of the MCAB board and Winter Carnival attendee.

Deven Sud '26 also spoke with The Campus about his experience at Winter Carnival. Despite his praise for the actual events, Sud noted that the advertising beforehand could have been better. Multiple activities had piqued Sud's interest, but when he went to sign up, the window to sign up had already passed.

Sud lamented his missed chance to participate in the ice sculpture competition. He praised MCAB for their creativity in the tournament's establishment and for their success in using the cash prize to increase general interest in the events.

"I think it's good for a sense of class unity," Sud added.

On Saturday morning, hundreds of students gathered at the Snowbowl to cheer on their classmates, and, later that evening, many more gathered in the tennis courts of the Virtue Field House to dance, snack and ride the mechanical bull at the Masquerade Ball. Sud and Rosser both commented that overall, upon reflection, they believed the weekend to have been a success.

Editors' note: Senior News Editor Susanna Schatz '24 contributed reporting.

ACADIA KLEPEIS/ THE MIDLEBURY CAMPUS

Participants in the ice sculpture competition on Friday of carnival weekend carve a fish design out of the ice block.

TRUSTEES TALK TUITION, CONSTRUCTION, FINANCES FOR 2023-2024

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Lands Committee will make a recommendation for design services to the full board in May.

"We expect the museum to begin the following summer as we need to decommission Battell Hall before we can begin construction of the new museum and we need to raise the money to pay for it," Provost wrote.

The Board also authorized the use of a $5 million unrestricted gift toward the construction of an expanded community childcare center that will double the number of spaces that Otter Creek and the College Street Children's center currently provide for children. The college created the Middlebury Early Care and Education Consortium in 2000, and helped start Otter Creek in 1984 and the College Street Children's Center in 2001.

Trustees voted to name the Outdoor Plaza at the Johnson Memorial Building after Julie Johnson Kidd '67, daughter of Christian A. Johnson, the namesake of the building. Kidd was a trustee from 1974 until 1982, when she resigned due to "disenchantment with the college," according to an article written in The Campus at the time.

She is the president of the Endeavor Foundation (formerly the Christian A. Johnson Endeavor Foundation), a nonprofit organization that contributes primarily to education projects. In 2003, the college awarded her a Doctor of Humane Letters.

Kidd gave the foundation a grant recommendation of $10 million to renovate the Johnson Memorial Building. Middlebury announced the funding in 2021 as anonymous, but Kidd has since allowed Middlebury to credit the generosity as a way of inspiring other donors to the college, Courcey told The Campus.

"Naming the new outdoor plaza in honor of Julie Johnson Kidd '67 recognizes not only her generosity of financial support but acknowledges the legacy of the Johnson and Kidd families at Middlebury," Courcey wrote. He added that Kidd's family, including her husband Wilmot, have joined her in their continued involvement with Middlebury.

Kidd received a personal tour of the Johnson Memorial Building by renovation architect and professor John McLeod on her October 2023 visit, and also spoke to students in architecture studies and studio art classes in session at the time, according to Courcey.

"Mrs. Kidd followed the renovation plans very closely and is pleased with the results of the building's improvements," Courcey wrote.

At the Board of Trustees meeting, President Laurie Patton, Interim Executive Vice President and Provost Michelle McCauley, and Interim Vice President for Academic Affairs for MIIS Stephen Snyder gave a presentation that showed that language enrollment nationally peaked in 2009, followed by a 29.3% decline through 2021.

"We wanted to outline for trustees the ways in which language learning is being threatened nationally, and the ways in which Middlebury maintains its strengths in language learning, and at the same time experiences some (not all) of those same challenges," McCauley wrote in an email to The Campus.

Middlebury has enrolled around 3,914 students in immersive language learning each year, and more than 500 students pursue a degree in a language. Middlebury Language Schools enrollments have been at record highs in the past five years, according to the announcement.

Snyder cited the incorporation of online language learning, coupled with curriculum innovation at MIIS similar to the language schools as some of the ways Middlebury has maintained its position as a language studies leader.

They also discussed opportunities to further develop Middlebury's language instruction, including rising interest in language studies in Europe and Asia, interest from other institutions to create pathways for their students to study at the Language Schools and increased interest in in-person and synchronous online instruction.

MIDDLEBURY NAMED TOP PRODUCER OF FULBRIGHTS FOR 2023-2024

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the United States," Gates said. "It feels like we look outward, we're connected to the outside world in a very dynamic, engaged, and interested way. That's what Fulbright is about. It's about fostering mutual understanding between people in the US and people in other countries."

Fulbright student recipients have the option to conduct research, pursue graduate study or teach English and U.S. culture abroad. Each year, approximately 8,000 students, scholars, teachers, artists and professionals from the United States and 160 other countries receive Fulbrights.

Asa Skinder '23, who majored jointly in environmental studies and geography with a minor in Spanish, currently works as an English teaching assistant in Mexico sharing knowledge of English, along with social and political aspects of life in the United States.

"I am personally really thankful for the professors I've had in the Spanish Department, the Middlebury Schools Abroad staff and Dean Lisa Gates, as well as the other Middlebury faculty and staff who help students apply for fellowships," Skinder wrote in an email to The Campus. "I feel that my time spent with all of those different folks really prepared me to be able to apply to Fulbright, and to have a successful experience while in Mexico during my fellowship."

Assistant Professor of Religion Justin Doran was one of the three faculty members awarded a Fulbright Scholar grant this year. He is currently working in São Paulo, Brazil on the last chapter of his book, in which he is comparing the ideologies that produced one of the largest buildings in Brazil, Edifício Copan, with the Templo de Salomão evangelical church.

Doran noted how Middlebury's global outlook provides the college an advantage in receiving Fulbright fellowships, countering its relative disadvantage as a four-year college without graduate studies.

"Middlebury's emphasis on languages and global studies actually makes it much more likely to be one of the prestigious Fulbright receivers," Doran told The Campus.

Given his positive experience during the fellowship, Skinder strongly encouraged Middlebury students to consider applying. "I've found it to be an amazing opportunity to spend a year outside of the US," Skinder said. "Middlebury was very supportive throughout the application process"

Doran also encouraged students to be globally-minded and not to miss the unique opportunity they have while at Middlebury to be exposed to the diversity of the world.

Gates echoed the sentiment that Middlebury students should take full advantage of the fellowship and scholarship opportunities, including the Fulbright program, that they have access to through Middlebury.

"Many students I've worked with had never heard of these fellowships before coming to Middlebury. They might not think that they would be good candidates, and when they go through the process and are successful, it's exciting," Gates explained.

Having worked with generations of students planning and preparing for their application, and spending a year in Germany as a Fulbright scholar from 1988 to 1989 herself, Gates recognizes the value of fellowship work in providing students with a clearer outlook on their lives.

"Fellowship work pushes students to reflect on their ambitions, their motivations, and it forces them to create space to imagine what they might want to do with their talents and energies," she said. "This experience can dramatically transform someone's life and take them into a new and exciting direction. It can affirm interest, and it can help you discover new interest. It sets you off onto fascinating paths."

Introduced by the late Senator J. William Fulbright, passed by the U.S. Congress, and signed into law by President Harry Truman in 1946 in the aftermath of World War II, the Fulbright Program was created to achieve a global vision for peaceful relations among nations. Since its inception, over 400,000 Fulbright recipients from the United States and 165 countries have studied, taught and conducted research in each other's countries while promoting international understanding and collaboration as participants and alumni.

"It's wonderful to engage students at these transitional moments in their lives, when they're thinking about what they're deeply interested in, what paths they want to take with their lives," Gates said. "To be part of that journey, supporting them, and helping them gain access to opportunities is a joy."

ADDISON WEST AND SPARROW ARTS SUPPLIES RELOCATE TO DOWNTOWN MIDDLEBURY

By MANDY BERGHELA
Local Editor

Addison West, a local home decoration business, relocated to the Stone Mill Public Market on Mill Street in January after nearly three years at its Main Street location. Sparrow Art Supplies, an art supplies stores and gallery, will take its place on Main Street after two years at their underground location next to the bridge over Otter Creek.

Monique Bonner '92 started selling home decor as well as vintage and antique goods at 44 Main Street in November 2020, when she first opened Addison West as a pop-up shop. She opened a second, more spacious location in Waitsfield, Vt. in the spring of 2022, which has made it challenging to handle everything at once.

"I loved the Main Street location, but it is very hard to staff people on the weekends," Bonner said in an interview with The Campus.

The Stone Mill Public Market — which offers a space for local businesses and community members to come together and buy and sell a variety of retail items — is staffed as a collective, rather than by individual businesses. Bonner will no longer need to staff Addison West at all times, and can instead focus primarily on restocking.

COURTESY PHOTO/BETH BLUESTEIN
"We are excited to welcome even more people. Plus, we will have much more visibility now being on street level, which was a difficulty before," said Beth Bluestein, the owner and gallery director of Sparrow Arts supply.

Claire Shapiro '24.5, a former employee at Addison West, will miss the Main Street location, but believes that the business will continue to grow despite the change.

"Addison West is poised to be able to do this transition really seamlessly," Shapiro wrote in an email to The Campus. "It has become a fixture in the community and has a strong, consistent brand identity that'll help the physical move to not feel like too much of a change. Having opened a whole second location recently, the team has good practice with turning a blank slate into something special."

Bonner said she is excited for Sparrow Arts Supplies to take over the space.

"Beth owns such a great business, and I am glad it will be at such a good spot," she said.

Beth Bluestein is the owner and gallery director of Sparrow Arts Supplies, which has been located in the basement of 52 Main Street since its opening in March 2022.

"This will be a really nice refresh for the store and gallery, almost like a blank canvas," Bluestein said. "We plan to get new products and more gallery shows, and we love it when students from Middlebury are part of that."

The move will make Sparrow Arts Supplies more accessible than it is in its current location, which requires patrons use a staircase to enter. The street level storefront will also grant both the store, as well as the local artists on display in Sparrow Arts Supplies' gallery, more exposure.

The store will use its final week in the current location to host a store-wide 20% off sale through March 2. Bluestein has not finalized a move-in date to the new 44 Main Street, but estimates a transition the week of March 18.

Sparrow Arts Supplies will also host a grand reopening party free and open to the public on April 5. Bluestein said there will be drinks, treats, a raffle and a new art show opening that night as well.

"The college and local community really benefit from having us here." Bluestein said. "There is not another nearby art store, and Vermont is such a creative place, how can there be no art store? Sure, you can buy art supplies online, but you can't feel the paper, or ask for advice like you can in person, and we are so glad to make this place more accessible to the artists in our community."

Moving begins a new chapter for each of the businesses.

"The relocating is like starting a new art piece." Bluestein said. "You can do all this planning and testing things out, but you really just have to be in it and see the flow of the store and how people navigate the store to really see how your product will all pan out."

Editor's note: Claire Shapiro '24.5 is the senior opinions editor for The Campus.

LIV, LOVE, LOCAL: SPECS CAFÉ

Liv, Love, Local is a column highlighting local businesses of Vermont, especially cafés and restaurants in the Middlebury area. Through interviews with owners, I want to highlight the specific successes and challenges that come along with small business ownership in Vermont, the hard work owners and employees put into these businesses, and how these spots serve as places to build community and connection.

By OLIVIA MUELLER
News Editor

Vermont resident and cocktail professional Sam Nelis is working to realize his full vision of the Specs Café: a café by day and cocktail bar by night, with an associated retail space for local beverages along with café and bar equipment. The Winooski, Vt. space opened as a café in December 2023, and currently operates from 8 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. daily. As renovations continue, Nelis hopes to expand the concept to add cocktail service by this coming summer.

"My vision was always to create a bar that was also a cafe," Nelis said.

He drew inspiration from European café-bars, where the concept is popular. As the son of international teachers, Nelis grew up in various countries — including Ecuador, Pakistan and Macedonia. He spent his formative high school years in Eastern Europe and Greece, where he was inspired by the café culture he experienced there.

"People will go to work from home and then they'll go downstairs to the local coffee shop with their colleagues and have their first cup of coffee with a few people where they sit down and they need to do a little bit of work or relax," Nelis explained. "I've always been drawn to that sort of culture, of being in a community space while eating and drinking. It's also, I think, kind of the epitome of what culture is."

When Emma Rose of Rosie's Market & Cafe decided to sell the café to focus on her chocolate production for Rosie's Confections, Nelis seized the opportunity to take over the space on Canal Street in downtown Winooski. Kyle Palmer, who served as the barista at Rosie's, has stayed on as lead barista at Specs.

Nelis has worked with the Vermont Small Business Development Center for the past two years to plan his venture. He was able to use the center's resources to help narrow down specifics like square footage and sales estimates to keep the business afloat. The Small Business Development Center also helped Nelis with the financial side of the business.

Continuing to renovate while simultaneously operating the café has been a challenge, but Nelis hopes that placing the cocktail bar toward the back of the space will not only keep the café side running smoothly but also provide a natural day-to-night transition for customers when the cocktail bar is open.

Nelis has years of experience in the cocktail and restaurant industry in Vermont — he helped to open Waterworks Food + Drink in Burlington and served as the beverage director at Barr Hill Gin in Montpelier, Vt. In that role, Nelis assisted with building out the bar program at the distillery, which was nominated for a James Beard Award this year and achieved semifinalist status.

The café serves local coffee from Woodstock, Vt.-based roaster Abracadabra for their drip coffee and cold brew and uses Moka, the same roaster with whom Rosie's worked, for its espresso.

The name "Specs" comes from "specifications," the detailed recipes of each drink.

"You would ask someone, what are the specs of your Manhattan? You know, what are the specs on those coffee beans from Abracadabra?" Nelis said.

The concept, Nelis described, is to bring the technical focus and precision of cocktails to all the drinks in the space, including the coffee. He also plans to create a local market in the adjacent space formerly occupied by Catland Vintage, a clothing store that recently closed.

The market would offer the relevant supplies for customers to craft their own drinks, from coffee beans and brewing equipment to soft alcohol like cider and wine, as well as cocktail ingredients, tools and recipe books.

Nelis has been intentional about creating an elevated, quality experience in the café without eliminating some of the favorite flavor combinations Rosie's customers enjoyed most.

"We can focus on classics mostly, you know, and do them really well… but then also make our house made syrups and fresh squeezed juices, and so we kind of brought that kind of cocktail attitude to the coffee bar," he said.

All of the coffee syrups at Specs are homemade with real ingredients rather than from plastic pump bottles. For example, Nelis adjusted the recipe of a popular coffee drink from Rosie's made with honey and lavender to use quality local products, including Bar Hill Honey and Vermont grown lavender, in its new iteration.

"So far people are giving a lot of good compliments for the flavors of the drinks," Nelis said.

Similar to a cocktail menu, Specs has a large variety of latte flavor combinations up on the board with clever names.

"We're hoping that that makes us stand out a little bit," he said.

Some latte flavors have been crafted with an explicit cocktail influence — Nelis created a drink with ginger syrup and an Angostura bitters whipped cream inspired by the aromatic bitters in an old fashioned or a Manhattan.

The cafe's current food offerings emphasize the use of local products, including granola for the yogurt cup from nearby Barrio Bakery in South Burlington, Vt. and non-coffee drinks from local companies like Middlebury's Aqua ViTea kombucha. Nelis said the food menu will continue to expand once the cocktail bars open.

Nelis expressed that being in Vermont, and Winooski in particular, is an exciting opportunity to build a close community connection.

"We've got regulars that live around the corner that literally come five, six days a week already… I love that idea of a third space," Nelis said. A third space is a place outside of work or home where members of the community can gather and connect together.

OLIVIA MUELLER/THE MIDDLEBURY CAMPUS
The concept of Specs is to bring the technical focus and precision of cocktails to all drinks in the space, including the coffee.

OLIVIA MUELLER/THE MIDDLEBURY CAMPUS
Specs uses Abracadabra Coffee Co. for its drip and cold brew offeringsl, amd Moka for its espresso.

Specs hosted its first cocktail night and fundraising event welcoming in the community for a taste of what the drinks menu will look like following the full buildout on Thursday, Feb. 22. While the day-to-night concept promises long days ahead for Nelis and the team, he feels excited and fulfilled by the community engagement of such a social career.

GRAPHIC NOVEL OF ONE OF THE EARLIEST LESBIAN COUPLES IN AMERICA DRAWS FROM HENRY SHELDON MUSEUM ARCHIVES

By EMILY HOGAN
Local Editor

TILLIE WALDEN
The Sheldon Museum's collection includes the famous 'double silhouette', an emblem of LGBTQ+ rights across the country.

The most extensive documentation of same-sex couples in America lives right in the town of Middlebury at the Henry Sheldon Museum. The museum holds archives of the relationship between Sylvia Drake and Charity Bryant, one of the earliest documented lesbian couples, when they lived in Weybridge, Vt. during the early to mid-nineteenth century. Now, those very archives will be used for an upcoming graphic novel.

Tillie Walden, Vermont's renowned cartoonist laureate, will take up residency at the museum beginning in May in order to write a graphic novel about the couple's life.

After living in several places around New England, Bryant and Drake settled down in Weybridge in 1807 until Bryant's death in 1851, according to the museum's website. The two lived together for 44 years and are now buried under the same headstone in Weybridge.

Thanks to the meticulous record-keeping of Henry Sheldon, a Middlebury resident who was passionate about local history, the Sheldon Museum now possesses the contents of a trunk of letters sent to Henry Sheldon by the Drake family from a familial home on Morgan Horse Farm Road where Drake spent her final years following Bryant's passing.

The letters detail her relationship to Bryant, as well as Drake's life after Bryant's death.

The archives include over 900 letters from the Drake family, which Eva Garcelon-Hart, the archivist at the museum, is currently organizing. It also contains diaries, business letters, business records and poems. Bryant and Drake often wrote poems to communicate with one another.

The museum also holds in its possession the 'double silhouette,' Bryant and Drake's silhouette profiles facing each other. The piece of art is considered to represent one of earliest documentations of a same-sex couple in the United States.

"It became a big symbol for a lot of gay people across the country," Garcelon-Hart told The Campus.

The collection has an adult cradle as well, which the couple kept in their house for times of sickness, as well as a pin cushion from their tailoring business and pieces of clothing. The museum does not have any photographs of Bryant and Drake.

Coco Moseley, executive director of the Sheldon Museum, wrote in an email to The Campus about what she expects Walden's work process in creating the graphic novel to look like.

"I'm sure she will be spending a lot of time in the Research Center with the archival materials, but I also look forward to showing her more of the Museum's collection to help ground her in the 19th century," Moseley wrote.

Walden's upcoming book will differ from the only previous narration of Bryant and Drake's lives, "Charity and Sylvia: A Same-Sex Marriage in Early America," written by Rachel Hope Cleves, a professor at the University of Victoria in British Columbia, in 2014. While Cleves used records from places outside of Vermont and focused on the couples' intimate relationship, Walden will exclusively rely on the Sheldon museum archives to tell the story of Bryant and Drake's years living together in Vermont, according to Garcelon-Hart.

Walden's project was commissioned by nonprofit arts organization Vermont Humanities and the Vermont branch of the National Endowment for the Humanities. Christopher Kaufman Ilstrup, executive director of Vermont Humanities, became interested in the story of Bryant and Drake through Cleves' book, according to Seven Days.

Vermont Humanities will use a $50,000 grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities to fund projects for its "United We Stand: Connecting Through Culture" initiative. The campaign is operating nationwide and allocates a full budget of $2.8 million to Humanities councils to support local programming.

"The goal of this is to support local programming that helps communities counter the destructive effects of hate-fueled violence on our democracy and public safety," said Ryan Newsanger, director of programming at Vermont Humanities.

Vermont Humanities has already partnered with Walden on several other projects. Most recently, the organization worked with the Center for Cartoon Studies, where Walden currently teaches, as well as the Vermont Secretary of State and other groups to create a book entitled "Freedom and Unity" a graphic novel intended to be a guide to civics and democracy in Vermont.

"She's become a bit of a national sensation for her work," Newswanger said of Walden. "We're thrilled that she is open to partnering with us."

Garcelon-Hart hopes that the book's accessible graphic novel format will draw a wider audience to the story of Bryant and Drake.

"Graphic novels became, in the last several years, a tool also for presenting historical material," she said. "If there's one thing about her she's incredibly committed to creating a truly historically accurate depiction."

Walden will give eight talks about her project at various libraries and nonprofits throughout 2024, and will likely finish the book in 2025.

While Garcelon-Hart sifts through the archives of Bryant and Drake's relationship, Moseley is working on creating a space in the museum dedicated to sharing the couple's story through the museum's archives, including a display of the couple's adult cradle. Current plans include a partnership with the Preservation Trust of Vermont to unveil a historic marker in front of Bryant and Drake's tombstone to mark their life together.

"I've personally been working with the staff team at the Sheldon to develop a space in the Museum dedicated to sharing Charity and Sylvia's story, including a place to display their adult cradle that served as a comfort to them," Moseley wrote in an email to The Campus.

The importance of the collection and Walden's book extends to the acceptance of women.

"It's also about women in the 19th century who supported themselves," said Garcelon-Hart, noting that Bryant and Drake lived together in their house at a time when women weren't even able to own property, while also owning a tailoring business together.

"There's lots of beautiful language and kind of a solid, interesting documentation of someone's life," Garcelon-Hart added.

Garcelon-Hart is excited for the public to read Walden's graphic novel, explaining that Bryant and Drake's story demonstrates the acceptance of rural communities to same-sex relationships over two centuries ago.

"People, I think, tended to think that big urban centers are more liberal and accepting. And here, these two women clearly were accepted," she said, adding that it was widely known the couple was in a relationship and thus was seen as a married couple.

I AM FORGETTING MY MOTHER TONGUE

Op-Ed

Yuvraj Shah *is an opinions editor and a member of the class of 2026.*

My go-to response to any icebreaker question is that I speak four languages. It piques peoples' interest, allows me to organically share the many places I call home and reminds me of my history. "I speak four languages." This is not false, but I have to confess that it is not entirely true either. The story of my linguistic ability is a story not of my skill in speaking foreign languages, but a story of resistance and survival. It is the story of a migrant group that desperately and silently clings onto language as its sole claim to a heritage that was once violently stolen.

International Mother Language Day is celebrated every year on Feb. 21. At the insistence of Bangladesh, who fought with their blood for the right to speak their native language of Bangla, the United Nations created this holiday in 1999 to recognise linguistic diversity and the growing need to preserve linguistic history.

I grew up in Kenya. English was the marker of intelligence in the migrant community. It was the passport to success. What was spoken in the four walls of our kitchen was solely reserved for that kitchen. The migrant is thrust into the arena of English, as it becomes the great myth of equality: "If I can speak English, I can do anything."

So what happens when a language begins to die out? Speaking a language is more than understanding a set of words and phrases. It is a living, breathing, sentient lens into the very society it flows through. Just under 50% of the world's 7,000 spoken languages are endangered, with one disappearing every two weeks.

I used to return home every day, after an exhausting day at my English-medium school, and immediately switch to speaking Gujarati. I was once embarrassed by how my grandmother, unable to learn English, would force me to speak Gujarati, the last marker of my ethnic connection to India. I also spoke Swahili, the Arabic-Bantu infused language of East Africa. Despite being the indigenous language of Kenya, I learnt Swahili as if I was a foreigner in Kenya, in a poor, thin and underdeveloped curriculum in schooling. English was pushed to the front by my family, government and eventually by myself.

English, Gujarati, Swahili. The markers of a British Indian Kenyan. No law, no politician, nothing can take my language away from me. That is, apart from myself. This is where I recognize that my truth is not the full truth. My mother's tongue — the tongue of her mother and her mother before — is one I struggle to get through. My phone calls home turn from relief to a chore, reminding me of my inability to understand Gujarati grammar. I can't count past twenty, I can't tell my grandmother how I feel because she cannot understand how I feel. We don't speak the same language. I can't read or write Gujarati. The history of my family, immigration papers out of India in 1884, my grandfather's 1960 diary entries of his first decade in London, written in Gujarati, are all hidden to me.

My former disdain toward my language has now become my biggest weakness. The one physical connection I have to my history is disconnected. Tear-stained pages of migration, hope, failure and growth remain hidden to me. I will likely never learn to read them. I have met Americans who speak better Swahili than me. I boldly claim my Kenyanness and, as I put on my Kenyan bracelet every morning, I am reminded of my fear of speaking with other Kenyans. They cannot know of my second shame. My Swahili is nearly all but forgotten.

This is the curse borne by migrants and their descendants. English becomes our sole way to look to the future, yet in doing so we forget our past. Gay, lesbian, printer, ambulance, divorce. Words that do not exist in Gujarati. Om, aarti, najjar, shakti, shaak, kismet, baa. Words that do not exist in English. I see my younger siblings, children of the global south, becoming English speaking patriots, tourists in their home countries, adding flags to their social media bios. Forgetting. I am learning to speak Chinese at Middlebury. I can now speak to someone in Mandarin Chinese, write beautiful characters and access a rich literary history. Yet, I am forgetting how to speak with my soul.

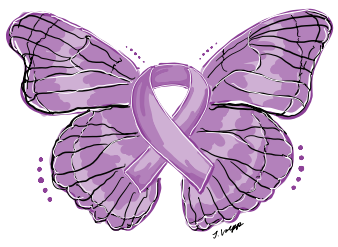
COURTESY PHOTO / OSHWAL CENTRE

Gujarati Indian Community Center in Nairobi, Kenya.

I call my sister and she makes me laugh. We speak Kenyan Gujarati, a dialect that belongs to so few. As she speaks to me, my accent changes; my mind breathes, I feel my memories flowing back into me. This is what linguistic heritage and resistance does. We remain ourselves. The migrant can grow, the migrant should grow. In fact, the migrant will one day not even be a migrant anymore. But their skin, feet and soul will not forget. They will yearn for the soil, scent and sight of their homeland. And only if they listen to their soul, appease it and allow their native language to flow through them once again, can the migrant survive.

Feb. 21 reminds us to let ourselves speak. Language is more than a set of sounds, but a canvas of history. So yes, I do speak four languages. I can't read or write one, and I hide behind my shame when the other appears. This is not the problem. I speak the language of my colonizer better than that of my mother. This is the problem.

WHAT IS IT TO HAVE AN EATING DISORDER?



Op-Ed

Christine McDow *is a member of the class of 2021.*

Content Warning: this article contains mention of self harm and suicide.

They say that to have an eating disorder is to be at war with yourself. Likewise, to paraphrase Baudelaire, they say that the greatest trick of the enemy is to convince you that there is no war. Overcoming an eating disorder is challenging because it requires you to choose to be at peace with your body all the while surrounded by others still waging war against their own.

Treatment is what turned the tide in the war against my body. This week, Feb. 26 to March 3, is Eating Disorders Awareness Week, and I am deeply concerned that Optum (also known as United Health Group) has chosen to mark the occasion by closing treatment centers, including one that helped save my life, Cielo House. I am sharing my story with the Middlebury Community to rally support for my petition to keep 25 eating disorder treatment programs open and save lives like mine.

I was young when I began waging war against my body. Bullying was my call to arms. Innocent as I was, I did not know that it was bad to be fat, let alone that being fat would lead me to experience social exclusion. Yet, ironically, waging war against my body led me to experience even greater social isolation.

As our ancestors beat plowshares into swords to prepare for battle, as a child, I turned my toys into tools for making war against my body. The tape measure purchased for sewing camp and the Wii Fit purchased for Christmas became tools for body checking. The inline skates purchased for my birthday became a tool for compulsive exercise. A science camp nutrition lesson became a tool for water loading and caloric restriction. Waging war against my body grew lonely at times. Yet in those moments when the pain of my loneliness led me to question my behaviors, it was as if my eating disorder hushed me, saying, "Shh, shh, just lose the weight and then you'll be happy." a

Moral relativism also helped me to justify the means through which I waged war against my body as I subjectively compared my behaviors to those of my friends. For instance, as I listened to one of my best friends tell of how he used self-h*rm to wage war against his body, my tools of war seemed like mere child's play.

Somehow the enemy convinced the grown-ups who might have called for a ceasefire to dismiss the warning signs. Doctors dismissed the warning signs of anemia and bradycardia (a slower than normal heart rate). Therapists dismissed the warning signs of elaborate food rituals and extensive food rules. Coaches dismissed the warning signs of dizziness and near fainting spells. Rather than calling for a ceasefire, some of the grown-ups urged the war effort, saying things along the lines of, "You lost weight. It looks good." So, the war waged on.

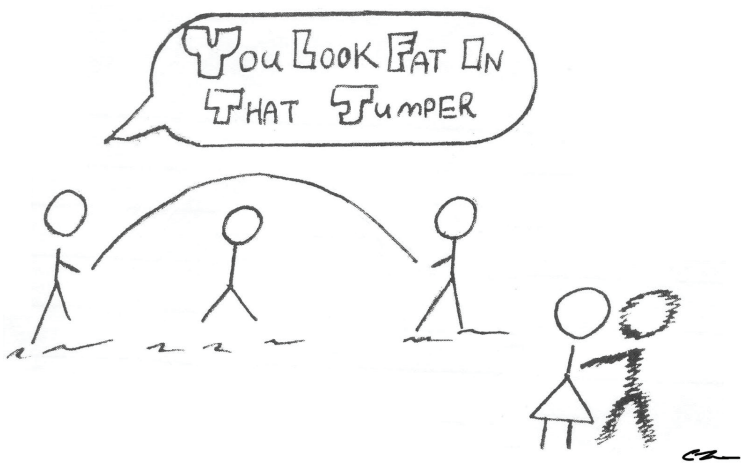
In my years at Middlebury, it seemed all too easy to find supporters of the war effort. As an underclassman, it was peers responding to dining hall discussions of my food rules and dietary restrictions with admiration, remarking along the lines of, "How do you do it?" In my sophomore summer field research, it was participants making comments about my body along the lines of, "You're so tiny" and "I was just about your size." My junior fall, it was guys I had just met who told me, "I'm only hanging out with you because you're cute" or "I thought I was going to get a date." My junior winter, backstage before a performance asking for help tightening my costume, it was a fellow performer saying, "I wish I had it like you." These and other interactions were constant reminders of my fears that my belonging was contingent on me fitting into a standard of beauty that was hipless and thin. Those fraught memories stoked the fear that helped keep the war effort alive.

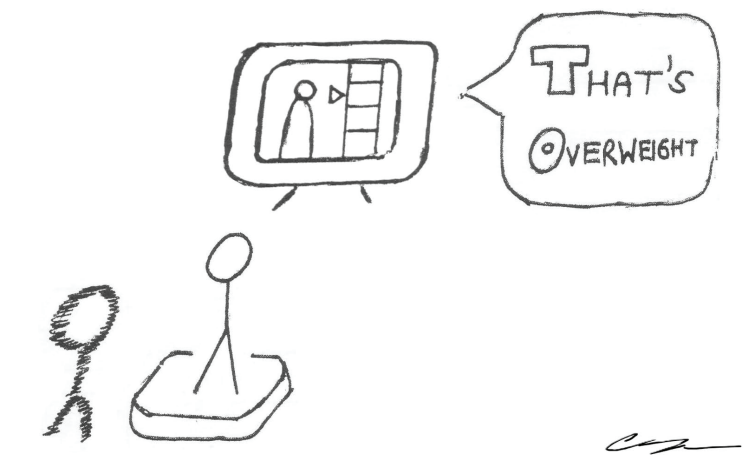
It took intensive treatment to help me recognize that I was at war with my body. Through individual and group therapy, I finally came to terms and said the quiet thing that my eating disorder was whispering to me out loud: "If I gain any more weight, I am going to k*ll myself." It was only then that I understood that my life was at stake.

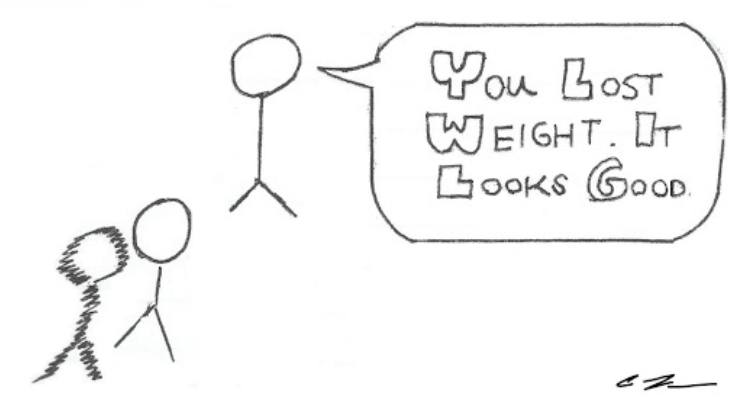
As I read more about eating disorders, I learned that my war against my body was greater than me. Books such as "Fearing the Black Body" taught me how white supremacy and other forms of hegemony benefit from women of color, like me, waging war against our bodies. Me and others being at peace with our bodies is disruptive to systems of capitalist exploitation, in particular a $70 billion diet industry, which thrive off of us being perpetually discontent with our bodies.

Yet, this head knowledge alone was insufficient to save me from my war against my body. Rather, drawing from twelve-step methods, I realized that for me to come to a place of peace with my body, I had to admit that I was powerless to my eating disorder, and I needed my higher power, my God, to save me from myself and for my community to hold me accountable to my recovery.

If my story has moved you, please consider supporting me and others seeking to be at peace with our bodies by signing my petition to tell Optum to stop closing eating disorder treatment centers.







IT'S SPRING CLEANING TIME: OUR INS AND OUTS LIST

Editorial

The editorial represents the opinion of the Middlebury Campus Editorial Board.

As we trudge through the final week of February and see some glimmers of sunlight, it's worth considering what intentional decisions we can make about how to spend the rest of the semester. What habits do we wish to leave behind in the winter and fall, and what lessons and goals do we wish to bring forth into the coming weeks?

In other words, it's spring cleaning time — what are our ins and outs for this semester?

In: Randomness

The classic Middlebury routine is hunkering down during the week, seeing the weekend as a horizon, and letting loose and partying hard on Friday and Saturday. But simply living for the weekend is no true way to live.

We implore you to blur the line between the week and weekend and create fun for yourself any day of the week, whether that be an impromptu karaoke night on a random Tuesday or ditching the Atwater parties to host a science fair on a Saturday.

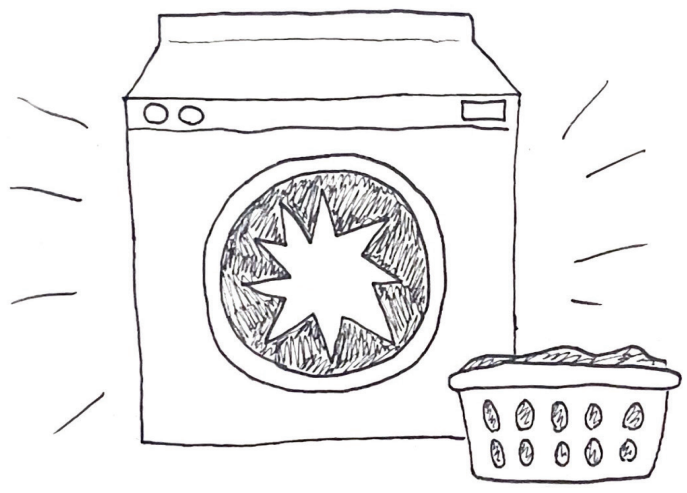
On the same line of spontaneity, venture outside your friend group. Ask a class friend to hang out outside of class. Make conversation with the people on the other side of your Atwater table. Dive into new things that interest you just for the sake of trying them.

In: Gratitude

Seek out the small moments of glory and joy in life, and try to acknowledge them. We can complain about the college and campaign for change — we often call out issues in our community and administration with our platform here — but there are parts of our lives here that are incredibly privileged. We can appreciate the quiet successes of day to day life here without detracting from the need to acknowledge systemic problems in the institution. Take joy in the occasions that give you life, and acknowledge the opportunities and people surrounding us with well-deserved gratitude.

In: Meaningful political engagement

It is a historic time with the war in Gaza and the looming US presidential election. Now — and always, for that matter — is an important time to read the news and discuss what is happening in the world and country in class and with your friends. As a member of the Middlebury community, you have access to guest talks on campus by expert voices. Vote in the upcoming election and encourage your peers to do so as well. Also, make your voice heard on campus and take the Middlebury Zeitgeist 6.0 survey, out this April.



Skiles Roberts-Salvador

Out: Competitiveness and comparison

To get to where we are today as Middlebury students we have all had to be driven and successful in our respective fields. This does not mean that we need to feel competitive and jealous of one anothers' accomplishments. This spring, let us reject unnecessary comparisons and take each others' successes as exciting momentum to propel us all forward.

Out: Being late

We are all on a schedule and have places to be. But if you agree to meet someone at a specific time, make a true effort to arrive punctually. We recognize the difference between running late for a meeting with a professor compared to a casual lunch with a friend, but being on time is an important skill to have, and shows respect for the other person's time. Arriving 15 minutes late to everything won't get you far in the real world.

Before we let you go, here's a list of some sillier "ins" and "outs" that we hope will resonate with you.

Our "ins" are celebrating Leap Day (today, Feb. 29!), reading The Campus over a meal, decorating your living space in intentional ways, country music (whether you interpret that as Beyoncé or Zach Bryan), pizza bagels in Wilson Cafe and embracing fluctuations in the weather.

Our "outs" are over-enrollment and limited housing, food waste in the dining halls, astrology (controversial, we know) and sending your friends an excessive number of TikToks and Reels.

Whatever your personal ins and outs list would look like, we hope you find some inspiration and wisdom in our advice for this semester. Most importantly, we urge you to consider being intentional about the choices you make in the coming weeks and months — summer, and for some, graduation, will be here before you know it.

WHY WE UNITE FOR UKRAINE

Op-Ed

***Kseniia Lebid** is a member of the class of 2026.*

Courtesy Photo / Switkriti Kharel and Justice Silva

The celebrated New York Crimean Tatar Ensemble enlivens Robison Hall.

Being a Ukrainian student in Vermont, studying at one of the most prestigious colleges in the United States, I feel the urge to use my privilege and resources to expedite Ukraine's victory. My sister, my friends and my home remain in Kyiv. So, despite the 4,420 miles that physically separate me from Ukraine, the war is constantly on my mind, and I feel the need to do my part.

United for Ukraine is an annual event organized by Ukrainian students at Middlebury that first started as a response to the full-scale invasion of Ukraine two years ago. The underlying motif of the initiative is to raise awareness about the Russian war in Ukraine and to showcase Ukrainian art. Today, Russia is physically destroying Ukrainian cultural heritage by bombing and looting museums and theaters, murdering Ukrainian artists and promoting a narrative that there is no such thing as Ukrainian art. United for Ukraine is our form of protest against these wrongs.

United for Ukraine 2024 was dedicated to the power of art as a form of resistance against Russian oppression. It was a compilation of poems, dances, cinematography and music. The chronological scope of the program stretched from Ukrainian art under the Russian Empire to modern art created in the context of the ongoing full-scale war. In this way, the event aimed to situate today's war in the context of centuries of Ukrainian resistance against Russian imperialism. This context can give people a better idea of why winning this war is so important for Ukrainians and should be important to everyone who values the human right to freedom.

The outcome of the Russian war in Ukraine relies heavily on which narratives prevail in the media space and who they benefit. Russia spends billions of dollars promoting ideas that discourage people from supporting and talking about Ukraine, and encourage them to vote against foreign military aid for Ukraine. That is why we, as Ukrainian students on campus, feel the urge to organize this event every year to tell people what this war really means to us.

My conversations with people from outside Ukraine, what I see people share on social media and media portrayal of the war in Ukraine demonstrate the lack of awareness of the context of this war. Ideas like "Russian-Ukrainian conflict is a proxy war between NATO and Russia," or "Russia will eventually win so the military aid for Ukraine only prolongs the conflict and results in more death and destruction," ignore the history of the Ukrainian colonial past under Russia and undermine the rights of Ukrainians for freedom and self-determination.

These points of view crucially miss the understanding that for Ukraine, losing this war is not an option. It would mean reversing history. It would mean forgetting the thousands who died for Ukrainian independence. It would be to forgive Russia for the genocide of the 1930s, for the deportation of indigenous people from Crimea and eastern Ukraine, for the persecution and murder of Ukrainian artists in the U.S.S.R. It would be to give up on our cultural and historical heritage that Russia will destroy or appropriate in case of its victory, and to lose our freedom.

Before the full-scale war, Ukraine was steadily moving toward important social changes such as the elimination of corruption and educational reforms. The feminist and LGBTQ+ movements were gaining more support from the people and more attention from the government. Today, during the Russian war, almost all the efforts of Ukrainians are focused on victory, and these social changes are no longer a priority. Losing the war means losing all the progress that was accomplished during Ukraine's independence and being suppressed by Russian censorship.

So Ukrainians will never stop fighting. If Ukraine doesn't get enough military aid, it means more casualties among the soldiers, more cities burned to the ground, more internally displaced people and more ruined lives. Ukraine will win, but the price of our victory depends on our joint efforts and the world's support. I encourage every reader to think about whose narratives they support next time they share information about Ukraine on social media or engage in a conversation about Russian war, and I hope to see more people supporting Ukrainian initiatives on campus, United for Ukraine being one of them.

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The Middlebury Campus

"Either/Or," a student's patchwork search for how to live

By MADELEINE KAPTEIN
Staff Writer

In the summer after my first semester at Middlebury, I read "The Idiot" by Elif Batuman, the novel to which "Either/Or" is the sequel. Both books center Selin, a Turkish American woman at Harvard beginning in the year 1995.

Named after the well-known work "Either/Or: A Fragment of Life" by Danish philosopher Søren Kierkegaard, Batuman's "Either/Or" details Selin's sophomore year of college. It chronicles her retrospections about her freshman year and her approach to a world full of ostensibly mystifying contradictions. She turns to literature — her newly declared major — for solace and answers.

"The Idiot" is named after Fyodor Dostoevsky's novel by the same title and follows Selin's freshman year. She is sharply observant, comically blunt and fascinated by her new college life, noting the quirky behavior of her roommates, throwing herself into her Russian and linguistics classes and putting the fresh (and powerful) invention of email to use.

Selin forms a friendship with the energetic and passionate Svetlana and an interest in the Hungarian senior math student Ivan, who gets her a summer job teaching English in a Hungarian village. Selin wants to be a writer and sets out after "interesting experiences" — experiences she considers worthy of fiction.

The first-person narration in "The Idiot" seamlessly blends together what Selin learns in her humanities classes and in her personal life. Splashes of social spontaneity provided by her residential college and her incessant train of curious thought while moving around campus charmingly reminded me of Middlebury and inspired me to consider my own college life in her dissecting, patchwork way.

While "The Idiot" felt a little flat or under-explained at times, I was intrigued enough to pick up Batuman's 2022 sequel. "Either/Or" is my favorite novel, and one I think many Middlebury students would enjoy reading.

It stands out from "The Idiot" in how much closer the reader comes to Selin. We intimately see her deeply analytical, often cynical thoughts, propelled by her acute observation and endless mental bank of memories and stories. She searches obsessively for the answer to the overarching question: How should I live?

Early in the story, Selin adopts a fascination with Kierkegaard's book, which is separated into two parts: one on the "aesthetic life" and another on the "ethical life." According to Kierkegaard, the "aesthetic life" occurs when one lives for themselves and seeks beautiful but perhaps fleeting experiences, while the ethical life exists when one adheres to moral principles and traditions, likely including getting married and having children. Arthur C. Brooks recently wrote about Kierkegaard's ideas for The Atlantic, describing these different lives as methods that can be employed throughout the changing phases of one's actual life.

While Selin is drawn towards an aesthetic life, Svetlana decisively follows an ethical one, a core difference that the friends often discuss in the dining hall and on the floor of each others' dorm rooms.

"I was still the kind of person who thought it was interesting to see what happened if you only ate cashews for a week," Selin writes as she watches Svetlana begin a new diet.

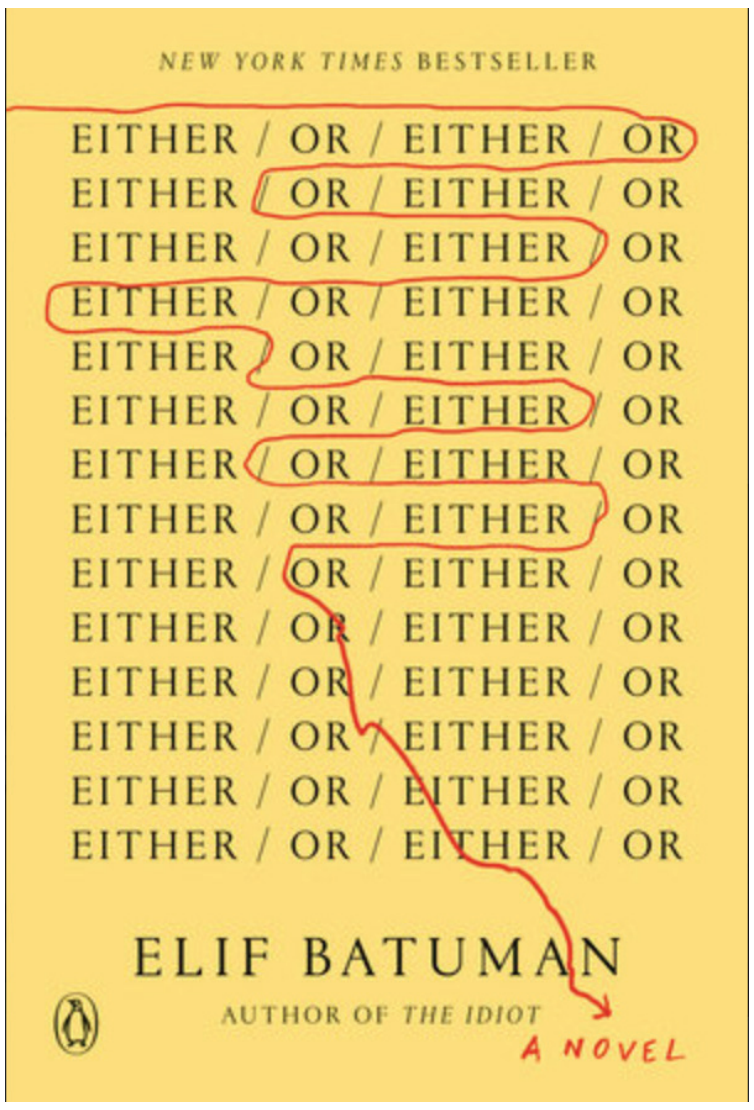
Selin's unconventionally belated first encounters with parties, alcohol and hookup culture, as well as incompetent mental health services, weekend trips with friends and visits back home, are saturated with references to the books and music she consumes as she searches for the answers to her questions about life. She approaches situations purely empirically and then deconstructively, as if they are happening for the first time and require immediate dissection. Selin comes off sometimes as wonderfully perceptive, and other times painfully oblivious.

Batuman weaves ample humor into Selin's narrative. She manages to make both mundane and unusual scenes — an overcrowded Pilates class or finding a stingray in her suite's sink, for instance — funny, mostly by way of her protagonist's witty reactions to them.

"I barely had time to gulp down half a bowl of Cracklin' Oat Bran — the most filling cereal, in almost a sinister way — before [Svetlana] made us leave for Russian," Selin narrates. "We were the first people there. At first it seemed like I might have time to tell her about Kierkegaard, but I had barely gotten started when our classmate Gavriil came in. Gavriil had a wiry build and fluffy hair resembling that of Mozart in the movie Amadeus, and was always climbing things. You might look at a library or a church and see something on the wall, and it would be that guy, Gavriil."

The songs "Criminal" by Fiona Apple and "Killing Me Softly With His Song" by the Fugees, the novels "Nadja" by André Breton, "Anna Karenina" by Leo Tolstoy, "The Portrait of a Lady" by Henry James and even the self-help book "The Rules: Time-Tested Secrets for Capturing the Heart of Mr. Right" by Ellein Fein are all pieces in the imperfect puzzle of the human condition she spends the novel toiling to fit together.

Readers do not need knowledge of the references in "Either/Or" to appreciate them, though familiarity here and there certainly enhances the experience. They are not unexplained allusions, but rather material that we feel we are discovering alongside Selin — we get the sense that she is more perplexed about their true meaning and application to the human condition than we are.



COURTESY PHOTO
"Either/Or" came out in 2024. Its name comes from Danish philosopher Søren Kierkegaard's "Either/Or: A Fragment of Life."

There are many passages in which Selin reflects on her search for a balance between all the material, memories and conversations she absorbs and weighs against each other, fueling a ceaseless game of ping-pong with herself — sometimes light-heartedly, sometimes in distress.

One quotation from the middle of "Either/Or" well captures its spirit and its relevance to our lives as Middlebury students: "How brief and magical it was that we all lived so close to each other and went in and out of each other's rooms, and our most important job was to solve mysteries. The temporariness made it all the more important to do the right thing — to follow the right leads."

That's enough of my rhapsodizing — go discover Batman's novels, particularly "Either/Or," for yourself. Young adults figuring out the world (temporarily) surrounded by such a tight-knit social space and the liberal arts just might find something that resonates.

LE CONSORT IN CONCERT

By MAKEDA HEVRIN
Contributing Writer

Music lovers from the college and Middlebury community alike gathered on Thursday, Feb. 22 at the Mahaney Arts Center for an evening of Baroque chamber music brought to Middlebury by Le Consort, a quartet of talented French string musicians that formed in 2015.

The ensemble is co-directed by violinist Théotime Langlois de Swarte and harpsichordist Justin Taylor. Taylor, violinist Sophie de Bardonnèche and cellist Hanna Salzenstein were joined onstage by guest violinist Augusta McKay Lodge, who is playing with the ensemble while de Swarte is on paternity leave following the birth of his second child.

The concert began at 7:30 p.m. in Robison Hall with Antonio Vivaldi's first ever published work: the Trio Sonata in G-minor, Op. 1, No. 1. Over the next two hours, Le Consort performed pieces written by a variety of composers ranging from Giovanni Battista Reali, a little-known Italian composer who published in the early 1700s, to the renowned German composer and musician Johann Sebastian Bach.

De Bardonnèche shared the intentionality behind Le Consort's wide-ranging repertoire.

"We love to mix famous composers with composers that no one knows," she said."We try to give a new way to approach Baroque music so that it feels natural and more accessible. We want to express feelings [and] playing by heart is a way to do that and express the music."

This fresh and expressive approach to playing classical Baroque works was evident in Le Consort's passionate, intimate performances, which ranged in sonic quality from crisp and clean melodies to lush and dramatic layering of instrumental parts. The invigorating and expressive playing of the ensemble was made possible by strong communication between the musicians, who paid close attention to one another and to first violinist de Bardonnèche as their leader.

Watching and listening to Le Consort perform live added dimensionality to the concert experience, as their onstage interactions added a new texture to the shared act of making music. The effect of fully collaborative performance was entrancing, giving new life to old music.

"[I] admired the interactions between them," audience member Roeskva Torhalsdottir '25 said.

"It was clear they were enjoying it and living in the moment. They had a way of feeling very present and of playing to me — it felt very personal."

The intimacy of the experience was enhanced by the vulnerability on the musicians' faces while they played their instruments, and the movement of the music through their bodies, catching and holding the audience's attention. Witnessing the artists' familiarity with their instruments and their mastery of each piece made it feel as though they were simultaneously singing and dancing with their instruments.

COURTESY PHOTO / JULIEN BERNHAMOU
Le Consort stopped in Middlebury on its North American tour this season.

Violinist de Bardonnèche was a dynamic and compelling presence onstage, leading the group skillfully in de Swarte's absence. Despite one or two brief hesitations or momentary timing errors, the vigor and cohesion with which the group played during McKay Lodge's first performance with the ensemble is a testament to their strength. In fact, the need for communication heightened by this departure from normalcy seemed to encourage each member to be less an individual musician and more a piece of the whole ensemble.

For the penultimate piece of the program, the ensemble played Bach's Concerto in "D Minor, BWV 974," by heart. Both de Bardonnèche and McKay Lodge learned new parts for the performance, and this, along with the spirited contributions of Taylor's harpsichord and Salzenstein's cello, lent an electric energy to the movement.

The performance of Bach's concerto stood out as the most vibrant and engaging selection of the night, perhaps convincing the audience to agree with de Bardonnèche: Playing a piece from memory does increase the expressiveness of the performers, adding to the emotional experience of the audience.

Le Consort's performance at Middlebury last week was a part of their North American tour in Canada and the United States this season. The group has enjoyed success across Europe and is listed by the concert program as being in residence at the Banque de France, the Singer-Polignac Foundation and the Abbaye de Royaumont.

Middlebury Art Museum unveils new spring exhibits

By AINE POWERS
Contributiong Writer

Staff, students and faculty recently gathered at a reception on Thursday, Feb. 22 to celebrate the opening of The Middlebury Museum of Art's two new spring exhibitions: "David Plowden: Portraits of America" and "Derrick Adams: Sanctuary." Both exhibitions will run until April 14, offering intimate looks at life in America.

"Portraits of America" presents the work of David Plowden, a renowned documentary photographer born in Boston during the Great Depression. Each uniformly sized black-and-white photograph offers a piercing glimpse of the people, places and infrastructure that defined life in the United States and Canada in the mid-twentieth century.

Plowden's photographs are organized thematically, grouped by the subject matter they depict. While the presentation is consistent across the photographs, the images of industrial and agricultural landscapes, from up-close physical portraits to snapshots of rolling fields and locomotives, show a society dominated by change.

One wall bears a powerful quote from Plowden: "All across America we have left abandoned, like carcasses after the feast, that which only yesterday was state of the art invention."

The exhibition was curated by former Chief Curator and Director of Engagement, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion at the college museum Jason Vrooman '03, who now serves as the Director of Education at the Shelburne Museum.

CHARLIE DEICHMAN-CASWELL / THE MIDDLEBURY CAMPUS
David Plowden's "Portraits of America" exhibit will be on display until April 14.

In a thought-provoking juxtaposition to Plowden's work, Adams' "Sanctuary" features colorful mixed media works that leap off the gallery's walls. A contemporary artist and performer based in Brooklyn, NY, Adams was inspired by "The Negro Motorist Green Book," which was published annually from 1936 to 1967 by travel writer Victor Hugo Green. The book was a guide for Black American travelers seeking to find food, lodging and entertainment during a time when leisure activities like going on a road trip were difficult to navigate due to discrimination and segregation.

"Sanctuary" was curated by Dexter Wimberly and Derrick Adams Studio, which was run by Adams himself.

Nostalgic neon business signs fill the room with a warm glow, while a trumpet melody created in collaboration with musician Dave Guy adds to the atmosphere of the exhibition. At the center of the room is the sculpture "The Road: Keep Your Head Down and Your Eyes Open," which depicts several fabric caps on wheels traveling across a raised road.

The toylike cars travel through large collaged excerpts of pages from "The Green Book." The whimsical nature of the sculpture contrasts with its instructional title, reminding the viewer of the harsh reality at hand.

Throughout his exhibit, Adams addresses the theme that "driving while black" is a politically charged act, both historically and in our contemporary landscape. His multi-media works deconstruct our built environment and are punctuated by "beacons," small concrete sculptures of houses that exude light and communicate the theme of seeking sanctuary.

The dialogue between the two exhibits is palpable, particularly in the monochromatically colored portraits of Black American travelers that hang near the doorway which transitions between Adam's exhibit and Plowden's.

The differences between their portraits highlight their distinct approaches to the past. Plowden, born in 1932, has crisscrossed the country to give the viewer hauntingly frozen moments in time from an America that is vanishing. His photographs, which feel like historic artifacts, are structural in nature, which contrasts with the fragile existence of the landscapes he portrays.

Contemporary artist Adams in comparison renegotiates and rebuilds the past through light, color, shape and sound, highlighting its relevance to our present. Addressing a complex history, his works communicate the perseverance of Black America and the fundamental desire to seek happiness.

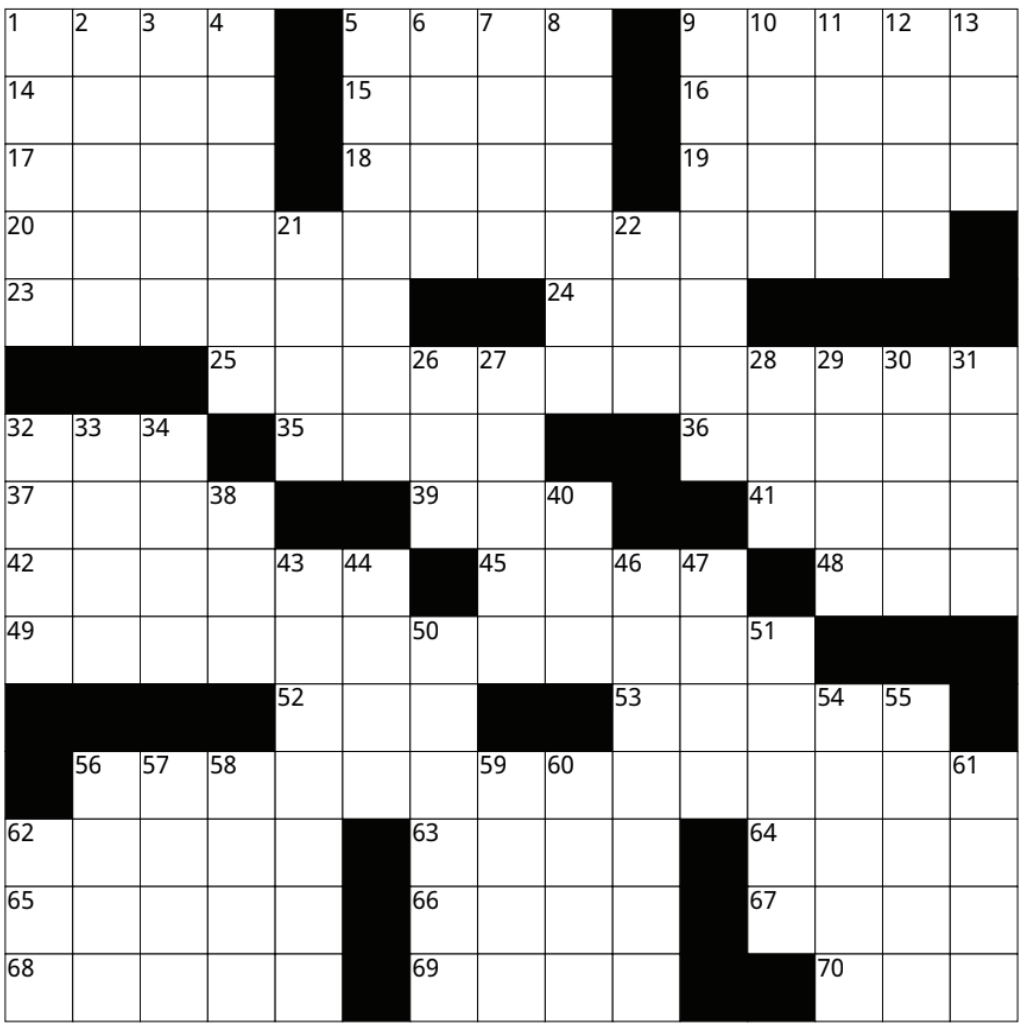
Together, "Portraits of America" and "Sanctuary" offer distinctive but complementary conceptualizations of life in America in the twentieth century, and how the past informs present society.

Extra! Extra! Read All About It

Avery Goldstein

ACROSS
1 Actor Baldwin
5 Down
9 Caffeinated Crossroad's creation
14 Slugger Sammy
15 Scissors topper
16 Detest
17 Sound of Music backdrop
18 Simplicity
19 Ways in or out
20 * Nonstop
23 Half of ASAP
24 Texter's "Just a sec"
25 * Rhyming weekend phrase for festivities, not scaries
32 Droop
35 Deal breaker?
36 Middlebury cold plunge locale
37 Clump of dirt
39 "West Wing" President Bartlet
41 Desperate
42 In jeopardy
45 Actor Hemsworth
48 Gentle touch
49 * "We're sinking! We're sinking!"
52 Fury
53 Eagle's descent
56 * 24/7
62 "You _____ Sunshine"
63 Paradise
64 Garfield's pal
65 747, e.g.
66 Genetic strands
67 Put in the mail
68 Literary theme, from the Greek
69 Black Friday event
70 L.L. Bean competitor

DOWN
1 Carne _____
2 Falana and Montez
3 Sports awards
4 Certain watches
5 2023 WNBA MVP Stewart
6 Bank offering
7 Tritons of the NCAA
8 Barely survived
9 Cat Noir partner
10 Peek follower
11 The old you?
12 Civil wrong
13 Hosp. areas
21 It may be proper
22 "Walk me!"
26 NBA's Erving, familiarly
27 Fastest Amtrak train
28 Silent approval
29 Faucet fault
30 Taj Mahal home
31 Throw, slangily
32 "Job offer" from a non-Middlebury email, usually
33 Utah ski resort
34 Like some details
38 Completed
40 Home project inits.
43 Responded in the affirmative
44 Name hidden backward in "Mary-Kate"
46 Google program that allows website creators to monetize their content
47 Bryn ___ College
50 Seth of "SNL"
51 Oscillates
54 More peculiar
55 "Age of Reason" author Thomas
56 Singer Guthrie
57 ____ year and what the starred clues and this February have in common
58 K followers
59 Seamstress Mode
60 Calf meat
61 Abominable snowman
62 Fitting



REEL CRITIC: "HUMAN FLOW"

By CHARLIE DEICHMAN-CASWELL
Staff Photographer

On the plush red seats of Axinn 232, attendees perched last week for a screening of "Human Flow," Ai Weiwei's 2017 visual exploration of human displacement. Co-sponsored by the Middlebury College Museum of Art and Middlebury History of Art and Architecture department, the event drew a mix of community members and students seated inconspicuously at the back of the room.

Douglas Perkins '94, associate director of operations and finance at the Museum of Art, introduced the film, and at 7 p.m., to the mechanical whirr of lowering window shades, pressed play. Middlebury last screened "Human Flow" in March 2022.

"Human Flow" is a powerful documentary that floats across 23 countries, offering an atypical view of human migration. Over the span of a year, the filmmakers captured scenes of urgency and desperation.

A constant presence in the film, Ai puts forth an unnarrated reflection of the challenges of migration faced by over 65 million people around the world. "Human Flow" relies exclusively on footage shot exclusively by Ai and his team, beginning with a serenity that contravenes the violence of the documentary's focus. With a decisive flow characteristic of the artist's previous work, the film slips between tranquility and chaos as placid landscapes are contrasted with refugee camps and the terror accosting those who inhabit them.

Born in August 1957 in Beijing, Ai is a contemporary artist, documentarian and activist. He began his career in the northwest of China and was outspoken against the Chinese government's approach to democracy and human rights, leading to his arrest in 2011 and detainment for 81 days without charge, according to the Guggenheim museum's website. Both a controversial and highly-influential figure, Ai's sculptures, photographs and public works have been displayed in galleries around the world.

Ai has balanced activism and social critique throughout his career as a contemporary artist, and "Human Flow" serves as a distressing reminder of the extent of human displacement. The project functions as a humanizing agent, providing a window into oft-overlooked populations who have been forced from their homes due to political violence, social persecution, or environmental threats.

In Greece and Serbia, the filmmakers explore the increasing militarization of national borders. From Jordan to southern Italy, day-to-day life in a refugee camp is detailed through accounts from the families who live there. Through revealing interviews and a blend of aerial and handheld footage, the film offers powerful insight into the lives of those searching for peace.

Contemplating forces of good in the face of crisis, Ai sheds light on global leaders and humanitarian workers whose work has been well-received. In Jordan, attention is given to efforts to create a haven for Syrian refugees at the Zaatari camp. At Berlin's Tegel airport, around 5,000 refugees and asylum seekers are currently being housed. The underlying message in "Human Flow" is one of desperation; while humanitarian aid is present, it is far from enough.

"Human Flow" is purposeful in displaying not only the mud and disease that festers in refugee camps, but also the determined spirit of their inhabitants. By showing joyful conversations and images of retained childhood innocence, the documentary highlights moments of levity in struggle.

Each of the featured groups in "Human Flow" is escaping a unique threat. The film lingers in Bangladesh where nearly half of Myanmar's Rohingya population arrived, fleeing genocide in their home nation which began in 2017.

In Kenya, drought has forced thousands of people from their homes. By 2030, it is estimated that as many as 700 million Africans will be displaced due to high water stress. As resources dwindle, the global refugee crisis worsens.

Monday's screening of "Human Flow" can be contextualized by its indisputable current relevance. In 2022, operations at Berlin-Tegel Airport expanded to accommodate an influx of refugees from Ukraine. Ukrainian refugees continue to live in uncertainty about their futures, with Feb. 24 marking two years since Russia's full-scale invasion of the country.

Some members of the audience nodded in recognition as the film shifted its focus to Gaza and a group of young women who spoke of being forgotten by the world. As of the film's release in 2017, more than 4.7 million Palestinians resided in Gaza and the West Bank. Today, Palestinians are the largest refugee population in the world at nearly 6 million, and Gaza is uninhabitable, according to the United Nations. Israel has faced accusations of genocide amidst a growing humanitarian crisis.

COURTESY PHOTO
Middlebury last screened "Human Flow" in March 2022.

"It's strange to grapple with, being a student and knowing that I'm going to go back to my room and do homework," attendee Marlow Saucier '24 said. "It's distressing."

The scenes of migration challenges depicted in Ai's film will continue to worsen if major action is not taken. According to the United Nations, there were approximately 108 million displaced people worldwide at the end of 2022, 40% of whom were children under the age of 18. Almost 400,000 children are born as refugees per year, the same United Nations data states.

Makes Ya Feel: February New Music Roundup

Gallery hoppers, Spotify stalkers, book worms, Letterboxd users and anyone who enjoys art, this is the place for you. Makes Ya Feel highlights art across all of its mediums, small and large scale, that (you guessed it) makes ya feel! Check back every other week for recommendations, reviews and discussions.

By ELLIE TRINKLE
News Editor

February: A time when snow sheds its fresh, exciting layer and is colored gray by the seemingly never-ending winter. The promise of spring looms as the snow begins to melt away the drear. February is conflicting. It marks the end of one season and the beginning of another.

My February was spent taking long walks, listening to music and trying to find some light in the melancholy. I have found music to be the best outlet for my own personal reflection and there was plenty of new music released this month.

Here is my February music roundup, featuring songs and albums that highlight the month's melancholy, the hope for spring and the fresh starts. These five were my personal favorite February releases, and ones I felt accurately encapsulated February in all of its cold, bright and promising glory.

"Under Water / In Air" by STRFKR

On the first day of February, indie-rock band STRFKR released the new single "Under Water / In Air." The song is reminiscent of early 2010s surf rock with some '80s electronic elements. The lyrics, which profess love to someone who is still figuring out their place in life, paired with wistful retro backing music echo beloved new wave bands Depeche Mode and New Order. This song is the perfect representation of February — bleak yet hopeful and the slightest bit haunting.

"Vertino" by Conway the Machine and Joey Bada$$

Conway the Machine and Joey Bada$$ collaborated to create a compelling track riddled with interesting musical elements for an overall enjoyable listen. The song seems to span decades through the different elements and genres it covers in five minutes. Its hard-hitting beats harken back to '90s rap projects, and its big electric guitar riffs give the track a classic rock feel.

The lyrics are a powerful portrait of the struggle to find success and resilience in difficult times. Maybe I'm biased because Joey Bada$$ went to my high school, but this song was a really fun listen and I consistently used it as a soundtrack to my walks around campus. There are a lot of different elements going on but they all work harmoniously, which is how February can feel at times, particularly with the whirlwind of a new semester starting.

"Any Light" by Loving

Four years after the release of their EP "Lately In Another Time," the British Columbian band Loving returns with a new album. "Any Light" is delicate, filled with gentle lyrics and entrancing instrumentals that effectively combine acoustic and jazz elements. The band falls under the psychedelic folk category, mixing poetic lyrics with complex instrumentals. The album has no skips, with each song flowing perfectly to the next. It sounds like spring is right around the corner, making it an apt album for February.

There is a plaintive quality to each song, yet also a sense of gentleness and satisfaction. My favorite track was "Medicine," a soft and atmospheric song with beautiful lyrics and instrumentals. The album feels approachable, and like it could be consumed in one sitting without getting overwhelmed. It's a defrosting album, much like February is a defrosting month, when the sun starts to come out and everything turns around.

SKILES ROBERTS-SALVADOR

"From The Capitol Vaults" by Nat King Cole

Capitol Records recently released another installment of vault tracks from the pioneer of jazz, Nat King Cole. The album includes never heard before songs as well as alternate and live versions of celebrated songs. Each has strong elements of jazz and swing. All of the tracks are romantic in their lyricism, strong big-band instrumentals, and Cole's vocals. It is always amazing to be able to listen to the music of a late artist, and Cole's legacy lives on throughout this music.

My favorite track was the dreamy "It's Not What You Say (It's How You Say It) — Live At The Sands," on which there is a palpable intimacy between Cole and the audience. This album feels like the brief moments when the wind stops howling, the snow glistens and February's never-ending cold feels less daunting.

"What Happened to the Beach?" by Declan McKenna

For his third studio album, Declan McKenna transitions from his indie-pop roots to a sound that is both experimental and inviting. Incorporating bell chimes, murmured voices and whirrs alongside simple guitar strummings, each song is interesting and fun to listen to. McKenna plays around with layering and warping lyrics that explore themes of introspection and enjoyment. He also encourages listeners through each song to breathe, and — much like the artist himself throughout the production of the album — have fun.

A highlight of the album was "Nothing Works," where McKenna reconciles his missteps with the hope of bettering himself while a nicely juxtaposed upbeat instrumental plays in the background. As the end of February finally brings sunshine and class workloads begin to increase, this album is the perfect reminder to pause in the chaos and just breathe.

Alexa Mustafaj ’25 secures legacy as highest scorer in women’s basketball history

By CHARLES CROUNSE
Senior Sports Editor

COLIN BOURQUE / COURTESY PHOTO
Alexa Mustafaj ‘25 has scored 1628 points over three seasons for the Panthers.

On Saturday, Feb. 17, Alexa Mustafaj ’25 drew a foul from Amherst College’s Maya Cwalina with a minute and 16 seconds remaining in their NESCAC quarterfinal matchup. Mustafaj stepped up to the line, took a deep breath and sank the ensuing free throw. The shot did more than just put the game beyond the Mammoths’ reach. Marking her 1,603rd point, the shot made Mustafaj the highest ever scorer in the 47 year history of Middlebury women’s basketball.

Mustafaj’s record comes after just three seasons with the team, meaning she still has one more year with the Panthers to extend her prolific scoring career. The previous record belonged to Sladja Kovijanic ’93, a Middlebury Hall-of-Famer and the only All-American in program history. Kovijanic even led the nation in points per game her senior year, making Mustafaj’s feat all the more impressive. Following Middlebury’s exit from the NESCAC tournament on Saturday, Feb. 24, Mustafaj now has 1,628 points to her name, putting her on pace to become the first Panther to surpass the 2,000 point mark. To discover how she came to be the star player she is today, I sat down with Alexa to chat about being a record breaker and her love of the game.

Charles Crounse: Congratulations on the new scoring record. Now, the record breaking point you scored came from the free throw line. You had just tied the record. This shot was to break it. Can you walk me through what was going through your head?

Alexa Mustafaj: Yeah, I knew I was pretty close to that whole game, but I was really trying to just focus on the present and not take my mind away from the game itself. The announcer briefly said I had tied the record after the last free throw. So I knew going in I had two chances to maybe just make one and I ended up doing it. So obviously it was an amazing feeling, and to have all my supporters there, like my coach, family and friends.

CC: Going back a little bit further coming into the season, you were already ninth in the scoring charts and you had scored over 1000 points. Was the scoring record a goal you had coming into the season or did that just kind of happen by accident?

AM: I wouldn’t be able to do it without my teammates. I was just focusing on making myself a better player, a better teammate. So I really didn’t think I would even be close to doing this, or even when I came into Middlebury, I didn’t think I would be playing the way I’ve been playing. I’m just forever grateful I chose a school like this and have had the support system to make me able to do this.

CC: We’re going to backtrack here a bit. Going way back, what was it that first drew you to basketball?

AM: I grew up with an older brother and two older cousins on a dead end, and we had a basketball court in the middle of our dead end. I’ve just grown up playing with the three boys who have pushed me and really made me like the person I am today.

CC: You play primarily as a shooting guard. Was that a position that you yourself picked, or was that something a coach decided?

AM: Honestly, my role changed coming into Middlebury. All of high school, I was a point guard, so I kind of facilitated the offense more, but coming to Middlebury, I became more of a scoring threat and a scoring factor, and my role changed where I wasn’t necessarily the point guard. I play [as a point guard] sometimes here and there, but now I’m more of the shooting guard and the true guard.

CC: It sounds like you’ve been playing for about as long as you can remember. Did you have any particular role models or players that you grew up watching that you aspired to be like?

AM: Honestly it was mostly about just playing. I definitely looked up to my brother and cousins while playing with them since I was little and how they would not go easy on me but not give up on me either. And so knowing how successful they were because they played college basketball as well, and just knowing that they’ve supported me all the way and it’s just really them who inspired me.

CC: This season, you and the team won the quarterfinals. You are 17–9 right now. Your first two years here, the team was 12–11 and 15–11, in 2022 and 2023 respectively. Is it fair to say that this has been your strongest season as a Panther?

AM: Definitely. I think when I came in, obviously it was the year after Covid-19, so with the seniors above me we all came in together. So definitely just developing that chemistry and knowing how to work with them for the past two years has really helped us become such a strong team this year. Obviously we’ve had some really strong new players come in, but throughout there has been the seniors above me and us seven [upperclassmen] who came in together really working together the past three years.

CC: You broke the record of Sladja Kovijanic, who is the program’s only All-American player and is in the school’s hall of fame. What has it been like to be compared to her or to be mentioned in the same sentence as her?

AM: I mean, it’s just amazing obviously, since what she did here is something you can’t even make up. She was a great player here. I don’t feel like I should be compared to her. If anything, I should be looking up to her. I see her name throughout women’s basketball and she really made a name for herself here. I’m so grateful that I’m even in a conversation with her.

CC: So, now you have the school scoring record. It might be a little early to ask this question, but what’s next? Is there another goal you have in mind?

AM: I just really want to win the NESCAC championship. We’ve never won one in the history of Middlebury women’s basketball, so I would say that goal has been bigger than anything I’ve hit so far. We’re all really focused on that and as a team, we all really want to win, so I’d love to do that while I’m here.

CC: Is there anything else you want to add that fans of the team may not see during games?

AM: I just feel like we’re such a supportive group of girls that nothing I’ve done or that we’ve done as a team would be possible without us supporting each other on and off the court. That’s just always the culture we’ve had. I feel like it has really helped us succeed this season, and we’re just really on our way up right now. We remind each other to work hard and not be complacent, and that’s been a big part of our success.

Editor’s Note: this interview has been lightly edited for brevity and clarity.

MEN’S BASKETBALL FALLS TO TUFTS UNIVERSITY IN NESCAC TOURNAMENT

By JONATHAN BUCHHOLZ
Contributing Writer

It was a year of growth for the Middlebury men’s basketball team. After a stellar 2022-23 campaign which saw them advance to the second round of the national tournament, the team endured a dip in form as they bowed out to Tufts University in the first round of NESCAC play this year. Despite matching the Jumbos for much of the first half, the Panthers had no response as their opponents pulled away in the second to take the victory 66-44.

Going into this season, the team hoped to replicate last year’s success, where they boasted a strong 19–4 regular season record and advanced to the league semifinals. But losing last year’s Alex Sobel ’23, named National Player of the Year by D3hoops.com, proved to affect the team more than anticipated. Middlebury lost their first four games of the season, several of which were agonizingly close, and Head Coach Jeff Brown said those games left team morale at an all-time low.

“No player in our program ever lost four games in a row, and they were really questioning things,” Brown said in an interview with The Campus.

A week after their fourth loss of the season, the Panthers rebounded with wins against Endicott College (90–86) and New England College (80–70). Despite these successes, Brown expressed that the team continued to face difficulties.

“We really had a challenging schedule and we played in twelve games against ranked opponents this year and unfortunately we finished 2–10,” Brown said.

In a rare year where Middlebury did not qualify for the NCAA DIII men’s basketball championship, Brown still deems this season a success. Faced with a number of injuries, the team may not have put together a winning record, but they developed some key players such as Tristan Joseph ’26 who will undoubtedly be a major assets next season.

“Sam Stevens, who has started most games in his career here, missed about half of the games this year because of injuries,” Brown said. “Jackson McKersie and Edward Witherington both missed ten or eleven games throughout the course of the season, so that really kind of shifted some opportunities for some other guys like Tristan to emerge into the starting line.”

In the 2022-23 season, Joseph played in just one game for three minutes. This year, he played in 25 games, started in 18 and was the second-highest scorer on the team.

Joseph was not alone in his improvement. David Brennan ’24.5 was another Panther who saw improvement over last year’s already strong performance, winning NESCAC Player of the Week for the first time and improving in almost every category on his stats sheet, including rebounds, blocks and points scored.

MICHAEL LAST / COURTESY PHOTO
David Brennan ’24.5 averaged 8.0 points per game this season, an improvement from his performance last season.

Brown also expressed great joy seeing Noah Osher ’23.5 flourish this season. In his freshman campaign, Osher scored just nine points. Three years later, he has eclipsed 1,000 career points, ending his time with the Panthers as the fourteenth highest scorer in all of Middlebury men’s basketball history with 1,166 career points.

“[Osher’s] emergence as a player has really been special to watch,” Brown said. [I’m] just a big fan of his: a top-notch student-athlete here on campus.”

With both Osher and Sobel now graduated, the Panthers will once again look to rebuild next season. While their presence will certainly be missed, the Panthers have an abundance of emerging talent on their roster and could be poised to have another breakout star next year.

SEVEN QUESTIONS WITH NIKKY SZTACHELSKI '25, WOMEN'S TRACK AND FIELD

GEORGE MADISON / COURTESY PHOTO

Nikky Sztachelski '25 finishes strong in an indoor race at Boston University.

By CHARLIE KEOHANE
Editor at Large

Nikky Sztachelski '25, from Weston, Conn., is in the midst the transition from winter to spring track. In this installment of seven questions, Sztachelski, a psychology major and film and media culture minor, talks about her pre-race snack, her favorite track memory and her hype song.

Charlie Keohane: I'll start with the question everyone asks: How did you get into running?

Nikky Sztachelski: I was switching between soccer and swimming, and then I stopped swimming in seventh grade and after fall in high school, I decided I would stop soccer. Sports have always been a big part of my life, and I didn't want to just abruptly stop in high school, so I decided to do winter track and field. In soccer, I was a forward, so running was a big part of my position, so I think that kind of translated with track. The transition between the two sports was pretty easy.

CK: What's your pre-race routine?

NS: I would say I'm one of the people who kind of prefers to be in my own space pre-race. I like to warm up and put my headphones in. Honestly, I like to put my headphones in pretty early, like even at the start of the meet. If I'm watching other people, I'm just kind of in my own zone. So I would say music is big, and then I do warm-up and everything. Like five minutes before the race goes off, I have a pack of Welch's gummies to just give me a boost of energy, and also, I feel like having that in my body after the race helps ease the nausea that I sometimes get.

CK: What are you looking forward to this season?

NS: This spring season, honestly, I'm excited specifically for the 400 [meter] race. With the 400 indoor, you are running in the same lane as other people, and I feel like there are a lot of factors that go into it. You might not necessarily have as good of a race because it is not just on you, you have to pay attention to the people around you, not getting blocked in, stuff like that. With the 400 in outdoor, you're in your lane the whole way, so I'm excited to have more control over that.

CK: What's something people don't know about running track?

NS: Looking at the sport as a spectator — I guess this goes for any sport — but for track, you don't see how mentally straining it can be at times. I feel like with track especially, you can do everything you're supposed to do, you can get all the sleep you need, have a good diet, recover properly, lift however many times you should, go to all the practices and everything, and you can still have a not great race. I feel like that impacts you a lot mentally, and it might not really show on the surface, but I feel like people who've never done track might not understand the mental side of it.

Kind of going along with that, too, I think once you progress a lot in track and get to that top shape, it's harder to get PRs [personal records], especially cutting off milliseconds, which I think is another thing that can kind of affect the mental aspect of it, which again can be hard [for spectators] to see if you're putting on a composed front.

CK: Do you have a favorite memory from your Middlebury career so far?

NS: Honestly, I think the San Diego [training trip]. I feel like when we're on campus, we still spend time in our own groups like the throwers, sprinters, jumpers and distance, but once we get to San Diego, you go out for lunch with people from different event groups, and you are at the beach, surfing, whatever it is. You really get to know people that even if you're physically close to them here, you have not really spoken to them or gotten to know them. So, I think that's the best part of my track career and something that I look forward to every year.

CK: What qualities do you like most about the team?

NS: I would say just how understanding and supportive everyone on the women's team is. I feel like we've all been in one another's places, whether it's a good place or a bad place at one point in time, and I think just being there for each other at practice or at competitions or even outside of that over the weekends. [I like] how supportive we are of one another and going both ways from upperclassmen to underclassmen but also underclassmen to upperclassmen just being there for one another.

CK: Last question: What is your hype song?

NS: "Fight Night" by Migos.

Editor's note: This interview has been lightly edited for brevity and clarity.

PANTHERS TAKE THIRD PLACE IN EISA CHAMPIONSHIPS WITH IMPRESSIVE SHOWING AT MIDDLEBURY CARNIVAL

By LEXI LINAFELTER
Sports Editor

Amidst the excitement of an electric home atmosphere, Middlebury tallied 739 total points in the Eastern Intercollegiate Ski Association (EISA) Championship this weekend, securing third place behind University of Vermont and Dartmouth College to conclude the regular season. The alpine and nordic races took place at the Middlebury Snow Bowl and Rikert Outdoor Center, giving the Panthers a home-hill advantage at the storied Middlebury Carnival.

"Waking up on Saturday morning and seeing the sun, I knew it was going to be a good day," Tatum Coutu '23.5, a member of the alpine skiing team, told The Campus. "I can't even describe how grateful I am that my final race got to be the Midd Carnival."

At the Snow Bowl, the alpine team boasted an impressive showing on the women's and men's sides. On Friday, Mika-Anne Reha '25 was crowned winner of the EISA championships in Slalom with a combined time of 1:41:04, marking her fourth podium finish of the season. Coutu and Emma Hall '23.5 joined Reha on the scoreboard in 12th (1:44.49) and 13th place (1:44.75).

On the men's side, all six Middlebury skiers finished the first run in the top 25: Charlie Lang '23.5 was the top-scoring Panther in eighth place (1:35.71), followed by Bradshaw Underhill '25 in 11th (1:36.01) and Nicholas Unkovskoy '27 in 13th (1:36.59).

This set the tone for another strong performance in the Giant Slalom on Saturday. Reha narrowly missed the podium by two hundredths of a second, finishing in fourth place after a striking comeback from 13th place after the first run (2:03.45). Coutu threw down a seventh-place finish with a two-run total of 2:03.85, and Katie Fynn '26 placed tenth (2:04.26). Underhill led the men's team with his third podium finish of the season, finishing in third (1:36.01), followed by Lang and Will Trudeau '23.5, who finished 12th (1:58.22) and 18th place (1:58.49), respectively.

"There could not have been a better ending to my ski career than on my home hill surrounded by friends, family, and the spirited support of the school and town of Middlebury," Coutu said. "I would've never thought that I would have two personal bests on my last two ski races ever. It just shows how much the crowd and energy of the weekend affect the athletes, in truly the best way possible."

At Rikert, the Middlebury nordic skiers also demonstrated might on their home course.

Logan Moore '25 paced the Panther men in the 7.5K skate on Friday with a tenth-place finish (21:28.6), followed by Jack Christner '25 (22:00.0) and Mason Wheeler '27 (22:00.2) who finished in 20th and 21st, respectively. For the women's team, Sofia Scirica '27 (26:22.3) and Shea Brams '26 (26:24.7) each placed 24th and 25th. Maggie Wagner '26 rounded out the scorers with a 29th-place result, crossing the finish at 26:56.5.

On Saturday, the Panthers enjoyed four top 20 finishes for the women in the 20K classic mass start. Brams continued her outstanding season with a third-place result, clocking in at 58:22,

earning her fourth podium in the last five races and the fifth this winter. Teammates Wagner and Scirica joined her on the leaderboard, finishing in 14th (1:00:34.1) and 16th (1:00:44.5) places.

Also securing four spots in the top 20, the men's squad was led by Moore in sixth place (50:48.2), followed by Christner in ninth place (51:01.9). Peter Warner '27 snagged the final scoring spot in 16th place, clocking in at 51:43.2.

The competition in the Northeast region of Division I skiing is undoubtedly fierce. Despite a formidable effort, Middlebury came in third behind the University of Vermont, who won the event with 943 points, followed by Dartmouth in second with 876.5 points. Finishing off the season at home, the Panthers have a lot to be proud of in their overall performances this season.

The athletic environment of both alpine and nordic skiing is fundamentally strenuous, characterized by exceptionally physically and emotionally demanding conditions, a long season and the pressure to perform individually on behalf of the team.

Despite ski racing being a primarily individual endeavor, Coutu described the combined personal and team scoring as a special facet of her sport that she enjoys.

"The unique team scoring factor in collegiate skiing adds a special dimension. One of the highlights of skiing for Middlebury has been our team culture and the genuine love and respect shared among all team members," Coutu said.

Next, selected Panthers will travel to Steamboat Springs, Colo. to take part in the NCAA Championships. The lineup will include Alexandra Cossette '24, Reha, Fynn, Underhill and Lang for the alpine team and Brams, Wagner, Christner and Moore for the nordic team. The four-day national championship will feature the alpine events at Mt. Werner and Howelsen Hills on March 6–9.